New Series 30 August 1951

World Review

Incorporating Review of Reviews

CONTENTS

		PAGE
POEMS FROM TIDESEND	*Osbert Sitwell*	2
EDITORIAL AND NOTES		4
THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN	*Cyril Falls*	8
BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM	*Roy Harrod*	12
ANTONI GAUDI	*Alexandre Cirici-Pellicer*	16
A TALE OF TWO AUTOCRATS	*Brian Connell*	19
THE PREROGATIVE OF MERCY	*Frederick Lawton*	26
SCULPTURE IN THE OPEN AIR	*Robert Melville*	29
THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE	*Gordon Rattray Taylor*	33
THE GREEN JACKET—II	*A short story by Mario Soldati*	37
THE PINCUSHION	*A short story by L. P. Hartley*	55
ITALIAN AND OTHER FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON DUTCH ART	*Nika Hulton*	59
FILMS IN SPACE	*Roger Manvell*	66

BOOK REVIEWS: by

Henry Treece; Felix Aprahamian; Patrick Heyworth; Patrick Home; Bertram Nicholls; Roy Walker; Edmund Penning-Rowsell; Hugh Porteus; Stevie Smith; P. M. Fitzgerald

POEMS: by *Edmund Cooper; Richard Kell; G. Rostrevor Hamilton*

COPYRIGHT OF ALL ARTICLES RESERVED

POEMS FROM TIDESEND

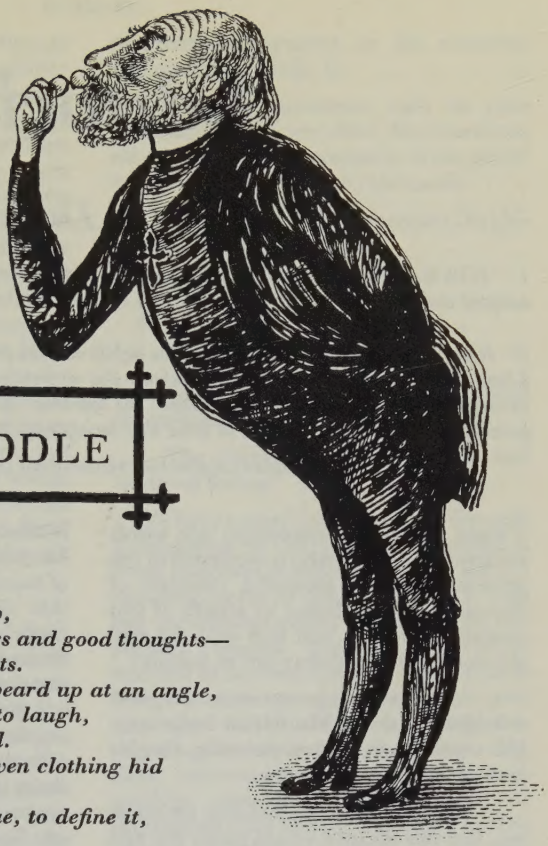
Osbert Sitwell

THE TIDESEND NIGHTINGALE

Wrongly named
Was Mrs. Hunger.
Thirst was her trouble, her chief joy, her glory,

In the fine summer evenings when her work was done
And she had given tea and minced mutton to the lodgers,
She would fall into her celebrated sequence;
Feel tired, feel hot, feel thirsty,
Quench her thirst with one fire or another,
Recall the family grandeur in old days,
(Which made her thirstier still),
Begin to feel the need of fresh air,
And hire a cab—always the same cab—
For the same drive.
Her large white head
Would nod and roll about from side to side
Over her ample, jet-strung body,
Or she would burst into rollicking bacchics,
Singing for miles, through echoing crescent and street,
Through country roads
And the idyllic northern woods of summer.
Then the cab would halt by a mere,
Where she would grow sad
In the honeysuckle-scented darkness,
And would chant into the night, at the stars,
The cab rocking a little with her song,
Until she thought it a boat and began to sleep.

Then at last, Mr. Thuddock on the box,
Sitting there, taking no notice,
Would give a flick of the whip to his horses,
Saying
'She's a nice lady when you know her ways.'



BISHOP CRIDDLE

The Bishop
Seemed a property bishop,
Made up of beards, gaiters and good thoughts—
Professional good thoughts.
Even when he jutted his beard up at an angle,
Throwing his head back to laugh,
He did not seem very real.
The essence which the raven clothing hid
Was difficult to isolate.
Let us attempt a catalogue, to define it,
A genuine benevolence,
Sorrow at having lost Mrs. Criddle,
A conventional belief in Heaven, and a modernist disbelief in Hell,
A worry, in Category One, at not being a Bishop at all,
Only a Bishop in name, a Suffragan—on sufferance, as it were,
Who never could be translated—
And then all the trouble with the curates:
It wore him down.
One had been found reading Bernard Shaw
Another was over keen to organize theatricals,
A third had been heard to use bad language,
A fourth had been seen peeping into a bar;
'I'm sure I don't know what has come over all these young men,'
The Bishop would say, rocking himself with vigour
In his mock-ecclesiastical chair,
'When I and my fellow Bishops were young men,
We burned to carry the gospel
To the man-eating tribes in Africa or New Guinea
—But they seem interested now in nothing, Nothing At All.'
And none of them, no single one, would marry,
Or even become engaged
To one of Canon Doribell's five daughters
—And then Vera was very difficult, would have her own way.

Editorial

A Note on a Dear Illusion

1. '*With his speech to Congress and his conduct during his homecoming, he* [*General MacArthur*] *has accepted and filled the rôle of greatness which awaited him.*' (*Life*, 21 May 1951)

2. *It may be thought that I have passed too lightly over the problem of catastrophe. Of that possibility I have throughout been intellectually conscious. But no society can live and function under the constant obsession of its own impending dissolution: the hypothesis of survival must be accepted, faith in the possibility of survival must exist, in order that society may be able to live and work in it.*'

(From the last of six lectures broadcast by E. H. Carr on 'The New Society')

THESE two recent quotations are worth studying by anyone who is interested in the present not very successful methods of humanity in conducting its affairs. If you analyse them, you will find that the real arguments of the writers are as follows:

1. America needs great men and is painfully short of them. MacArthur looks more like a great man than anyone else, *therefore* he must be one.

2. We are apparently heading for disaster. But this disaster would mean the end of our society (and, in particular, of the British experiments in planned economy), *therefore we must not believe in it.*

I am much attracted to this style of argument because of its ease and simplicity. We have only to decide what it is we want and everything else follows. Historians, ever since St. Augustine, have accustomed us to judge by results: I mean the process which Lord Raglan summed up in *The Hero*: 'Drake was playing bowls when the Armada came' (I quote from memory) 'but he defeated the Armada, so he was a good admiral and the game of bowls was a sign of nonchalance. Charles II was playing battledore when the Dutch sailed up the Medway, but they succeeded, so the game of battledore was criminal negligence.' To this normal and natural procedure of historians, Marx added the determinist element which made the game of battledore not only criminal but irrelevant.

I believe, however, that the improved argument which puts the results first and adapts the present and the future to fit them is a development of our own wistful century. It is an impulse, I know, which can be analysed as a mental disease, but it sometimes seems to me that it is the strongest one left to us. How else could we have pretended for over a year, in 1939, that we were still at peace? How else could the authors of an extraordinary pamphlet *One Way Only* have persuaded themselves that the Soviet strength is grossly overestimated, and argue that because Stalin has not attacked us already, he will not attack us at all?

* * *

Turning back to the first of my quotations, that about General MacArthur, I am struck again by that fiercest and most disappointing of all our obsessions, the desire for great men.[1] *We need them, therefore they*

[1]*Anyone who studies American literature must have noticed that it is necessary to jack oneself up to an immensely heightened standard of 'greatness' imposed by the corps of American critics. One must take Washington Irving (and his times) as the Elizabethans, Poe (and his times) as Keats and Shelley, and proceed from there. I have recently seen Dos Passos compared with Swift, and Scott Fitzgerald with Dante. All this is the result of the truth, obvious to a child, that a great country must have a great literature*

must be there, and since there is no time to allow them to rise gradually from obscurity in the old fashion, helped a little by chance, by a discerning commander or a patron luckily alighting from his carriage, we have to give them a desperate shove from behind, while far from waiting for their slow emergence, we cast around with eagerness which conceals despair for the least signs of the modern god. Someone to look up to! It seems such a little want, such a childish want (though recent history has proved it manifestly harmful) that I am moved by it sometimes. But perhaps the most pathetic aspect of it is not *how* but *where* we look, always in the wrong place, the place where we found it last time, but which is now empty, though still warm. The very crudest form of the search (though I do not think the key to the secret is here) can be illustrated from Germany in the cult of Remer.

But it is even more irritating, I find, to watch it at work in the sphere of art and letters. The mystification of the larger public (who have 'given up' painting and architecture and 'judge novels as children do trains, by their length') has led to the creation of an apparatus for creating greatness which works almost entirely in a vacuum. It involves the Arts Council, the Art Galleries, the Third Programme, Sir Kenneth Clark, and other pieces of well-oiled machinery, and I should add that it works very efficiently. That is to say, it does, fairly regularly, produce writers and, more often, painters and say that they are great: if we feel dissatisfied, it is either because we are ungrateful, or possibly, as I have suggested, because a mistake has been made very early on in the proceedings, and the critical experts are looking in the wrong places.

They are looking, as might be expected, *where they found it before*, in the last unquestionably productive period, the nineteen-twenties. (It was, also, a time when critics enjoyed an enviable position of power and we must not blame them if they look back to it with nostalgia. They were the interpreters and fought an honourable and exciting action against a hostile public.) Genius and the inspiration to greatness appeared, in the nineteen-twenties, principally in:

1. Various movements such as style mécanique, neo-surrealism, functionalism, etc., which were unacceptable to the public and 'understood' only by intimates.

2. The ballet (which then meant Diaghileff's later experiments).

3. Little magazines.

4. Cliques of exiles.

5. Sons of miners.

6. Brave experimental theatres with expressionist interludes.

7. The literature of self-analysis and 'states of feeling'.

We have passed since those days through a revolution in the sphere of *decoration*, a great upheaval of superficial taste. But for enduring works of art, works which with sad unconscious vanity are said to be important 'because they are particularly relevant to our own time', for greatness, in fact, the critics search and scrabble again and again in the old accustomed places. Anything which is difficult, narrow, dry, dark, over-sensitive, word-spinning, despairing, abstract, incomprehensible or intoxicated with its own childhood has the dearest of those old places. Once they yielded so much, and there were giants in those days.

* * *

I should like, when I have more space, to say something more about these ideas, particularly in regard to the public, once a ram struggling in the thicket, but now a docile sacrifice. Meanwhile I had the delight and mild shock of meeting an unexpected friend when the other day I read Julien Gracq's *La Litterature à l'Estomac*.

This pamphlet (Julien Gracq is a novelist and very young professor of history) is a brilliant development of the theme of greatness and the dilemma of the writer and critic, which is complicated in France by the ubiquitous 'man of letters'. I shall be publishing a translation of *La Litterature à l'Estomac* soon in *World Review* and I recommend my readers not to miss it.

DESMOND FITZGERALD

Notes

REARMAMENT DANGERS

The rearmament drive has thrown into relief the ambivalent nature of the threat to Europe's security. The first post-war wave of Communism was combated by general economic recovery. Now it is proved that this alone is not enough, and that new-found prosperity must be reinforced by military measures. This entails serious burdens. 1951 will see an increase in the ratio of military expenditure to national income by some fifty per cent in most countries, and trade balances will be adversely affected by the need to buy raw materials for non-productive purposes.

Inflation is already rampant in Europe, and with rising prices and lowered standards the internal threat from Communism will increase. Between September 1949 and September 1950, wholesale prices jumped twenty per cent. The increase since has been at the rate of between two and four per cent per month. Credit control, the main anti-inflationary weapon in France, Italy and Belgium, has already reached the limit of its usefulness. Fiscal and administrative measures such as are employed in Britain, Holland and Scandinavia, are becoming increasingly inflexible. Some alleviation might yet be obtained by an upward revaluation of the European currencies, but respect for the value of money is rapidly decreasing. The situation is extremely serious, and the political effects of still-incomplete co-ordination of the Western effort more than menacing.

ARROGANCE AND FOLLY

The Egyptians frequently complain that they are never given an opportunity in this country to state their case for a revision of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 'Friendship and Alliance'. After their outrageous conduct in stopping and boarding the British steamer *Empire Roach* in the Gulf of Akaba, nobody is likely to listen to anything they say until they apologise. Not that there is much hope of that. The Egyptian War Minister and Foreign Minister have persisted in the statement that the *Empire Roach* was steaming in a prohibited zone—doubly false because the Egyptians have no right to declare the Enterprise Channel a prohibited zone, and even if they had, the *Empire Roach* was outside this zone when boarded. The destroyers *Chevron*, *Chequers*, *Chivalrous* and *Chieftain* will be able to prevent any more such incidents, but the ugly spirit behind them is something only the Egyptians can cure. The sooner they do so, the better, because there must be a limit to what even Mr. Morrison can tolerate.

Meanwhile, the Persians, encouraged like one juvenile delinquent by the antics of another, continue to behave as if the British will put up with anything. The British used to be accused (usually by the French) of behaving like a governess. There comes a time when a governess is badly needed.

DEADLOCK IN FRANCE

The composition of France's new chamber gives little cause for complacency. In a modified form, the strength and intentions of the various parties bear an unpleasant resemblance to the German Reichstag in 1932. On the one extreme stands a strong Communist bloc, pledged to revolution, and on the other a strong Right-Wing group pledged to reform of the constitution and the establishment of new labour-capital associations. The Government 'Third Force' can only ensure a majority with the aid of the Conservative 'Fourth Force'—an unlikely combination in the long run, and calculated to end in deadlock. The Gaullists have stated that they will never take part in the Government coalition, and will accept responsibility only on the basis of exclusive power. The stage is set for developments which can only injure parliamentary democracy.

In spite of the swing to the Right, the parties of the Left—Radicals, M.R.P., Socialists and Communists—still retain sixty-three per cent of the seats. More significantly, the concentric pressure of Marshall Aid, economic recovery and international reaction to Russian policies has failed to reduce Communist strength to any perceptible degree. If the French economy falters and prices and scarcities increase under the pressure of Atlantic rearmament, it remains to be seen whether France possesses the necessary resilience to combat increasing radicalism from the two extremes.

YUGOSLAV FEARS

Yugoslavia has become the litmus-paper of Russia's intentions in the West. Last November, after the MacArthur disaster on the Yalu, the Yugoslavs expected the Russians to press home their advantage in Indo-China during the winter, and support a satellite invasion of their country in the spring. That immediate danger passed, and Persia may provide the diversion which will see them through another year. Nevertheless, they feel that a combination of completed satellite rearmament and a re-orientation of the Russian drive may again place them in acute danger. Yugoslav warnings should not be ignored. Of all the countries in contact with the West, their leaders possess the most developed gift of plotting the Kremlin's future course.

Developments within the country are highly instructive. The last lingerings of faith in Russia and Soviet methods died with the Korean invasion, and a real effort is being made to loosen the economic structure and soften the bureaucratic centralisation of dictatorship. The Russians are now declared to be the deviationists from Communism, and there is no doubt that the brilliant Yugoslav dialecticians and propagandists are getting an increasing hearing in the Balkans. From this point of view alone, Tito is the most valuable potential ally the West has, and grants to aid his shattered economy are one of the best investments we are making in the Cold War.

INDONESIA

The former Dutch East Indies present the spectacle of a territory so fruitful and so fecund that present mismanagement and misgovernment have little basic effect on the body politic. Standards have sunk; corruption is rife; the cities are strewn with filth, and foreigners are insulted. Yet the rich volcanic earth produces such an abundance of rice, maize, yams and tapioca that the myriad villages live in conditions of equanimity and prosperity. Rubber and copra, the main articles of exchange, are produced largely on smallholdings, and if production falls, the individual peasant can always rely on his vegetable patch for subsistence.

The legislative is weak, and the country is only held together by the President and the Army. Yet the government is no dictatorship in the normal sense. The press is free, but there is no indication of any elections to confirm Dr. Soekarno in power. For the present, he relies on a free adaptation of some of Nehru's principles, combined with some odd self-cancelling ones of his own. Dutch advisers are still indispensable in the financial and commercial world, and Dutch officers still train the Indonesian army, yet it seems that the Dutch Indonesian Union cannot last much longer. What comes then is hard to foretell. At least the Communist danger is relatively small, due largely to the individual, contented and traditional organisation of village life.

KASHMIR

The United Nations have persuaded yet another mediator to try and solve the vexed question of Kashmir. Dr. Frank Graham has an admirable record for such conciliatory work, but it will tax even his capacities to resolve the present deadlock. The two newest members of the Commonwealth, India and Pakistan, stand embattled along a cease-fire line, which only the presence of thirty-five U.N. military observers prevents from flaring into spasmodic conflict. The normal channels of trade are blocked, and Kashmir's economy is disrupted.

The present National Conference Government, headed by Sheik Abdullah, favours accession to India. They are carrying out a comprehensive policy of land reform, and are not untainted with Communist influence. One third of the country, Azad Kashmir, is under free administration and adheres to Pakistan. Moreover, they are convinced that with an eighty per cent Moslem population, Kashmir would vote for accession to Pakistan in the event of a plebiscite—a procedure which India is refusing even to consider. The Nehru Government rests its case on alleged Pakistan 'aggression' in the first instance, and the now exiled Maharajah's declaration of accession to India. The only real solution would be for an independent Kashmir under a joint Indo-Pakistani condominium. If Dr. Graham can achieve this, he will have rendered a remarkable service.

Greece and Turkey have now joined NATO. Professor Falls favours a separate pact in the Middle East, but the American view prevailed

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

CYRIL FALLS

THE North Atlantic Treaty was, as its title implies, designed to promote the common defence of nations bordering on the northern ocean and possessing an interest in its waters. States participating in it bind themselves to common action in the defence of any participant which may be assailed. The corner-stone of the treaty is the United States. A command of the NATO has been set up in Europe with an American, General Eisenhower, as Supreme Commander.

The Treaty has, however, already been extended to include a power, Italy, which does not touch the North Atlantic and the interest of which in the Atlantic is less direct and less strong than those of the Atlantic states. This was a matter of convenience and appeared a common-sense arrangement. The illogicality in it was ignored, I think justly; yet at the same time it may be noted that once the scope of a pact of this type spreads beyond its natural boundaries, the question may arise where a halt ought to be called. The NATO did not cover the whole of the Mediterranean but only the western part. Its eastern boundary just included the heel of Italy. Having carried it 1,300 miles into the Mediterranean, it may be asked whether any strong reasons exist why it should not be carried on another 900 miles, to the Levant. This question has now been put.

The occasion has been the application of Greece and Turkey to join the NATO, a request which, it must be admitted, had been left a long time unanswered. The political situation of the two countries differs. Turkey has a treaty with Britain and France—not with the United States—but the events of the late war may have made it, while still valid, fly-blown, shall we say, in need of repair, if not of replacement. Greece has no such treaty. Britain and France announced a unilateral guarantee of aid in the event of aggression against Greece, on the eve of war. It would take an expert to say whether it remains valid. It might be argued that the aid applied to the situation existing in 1939; that so far as Britain was concerned, the aid was given during the war, and that the promise was thus fulfilled and 'used up'. No limit in time, however, was put to the promise of aid, and it seems to me that it must stand unless withdrawn. It is, however, unilateral, and involves Greece in no obligation; nor does it include the United States.

I spoke of extending the scope of the North Atlantic Treaty to the Levant, but that is a vague term. The inclusion of Turkey would, in fact, stretch the treaty much further. Territorially, Turkey is to a far greater extent an Asiatic than a European power. The country extends along the shore of the Black Sea to the Caucasus. It extends to within about two hundred and fifty miles of the Caspian. In the north-east corner it is coterminous with the Soviet republics of Georgia and Armenia, and also with Persia. This is indeed a far cry from the North Atlantic. It may be added that Turkey stands in at least as great danger in the Caucasus as in her European territory of Thrace, probably in greater.

Moreover, if the treaty were to be stretched so far, there might be proposals for an even greater extension. If Turkey, it might be said, why not Egypt? What of Israel? What of the Arab states? I am not raising difficulties for the sake of doing so, and I am quite convinced that common sense, which might not call a halt before reaching Turkey, would do so at that point if it were reached. It is impossible to imagine more uneasy bedfellows than, for example, Egypt and Israel—not only to each other but to any further partners who

might have to share the bed. In any case it would be virtually impossible to work such an alliance under a single military command, and even, I think, as a new group of that command, without hopelessly clogging it. SHAPE, General Eisenhower's command, is already complex and inclined to be cumbersome. The effect of bringing in all these other states would, in my opinion, be to render it dropsical and to turn the headquarters into a new Tower of Babel.

Yet the advantages of concluding a defence pact in some form, which includes both Turkey and Greece, are so great that some solution must speedily be found. Old foes in the past, there are now no differences or divergent interests to divide them. Their friendship has a business basis, nothing to be ashamed of, and in fact the soundest basis for friendship in international affairs. They seek to co-ordinate defence in order to ensure freedom. They can render each other powerful aid. They seek also the strongest attainable guarantee of assistance if they should be attacked, and they are ready to pledge themselves to afford whatever assistance lies in their power to their partners.

Their value to treaty partners would be as great as to each other. Their armies are sound and high-spirited. So far as local aggression by a satellite, such as was engineered in Korea, is concerned, a Graeco-Turkish defensive pact would of itself nullify the power of Bulgaria to attempt anything of the sort; in fact, if they were confident that this was the only sort of threat which they would have to face, they might well not be interested in entering any larger organisation. Taking a wider view, surveying the Middle East as a whole, it is clear that Turkey is one of its corner-stones and that Greece's close association with her would act as a brace to it. A schoolboy can appreciate, for example, the importance of the islands of the Aegean with reference to the Dardanelles. Apart from all this, however friendly nations may become without a treaty of friendship, such an arrangement always leads to closer contacts, greater frankness in discussion, deeper mutual knowledge. All these things are desired by us as regards Turkey. It is true that they exist in Greece without a pact, but this is for special reasons connected with the 'bandit war' of the past.

I myself strongly favour a separate pact in the Middle East, and consider that its forces should be controlled by an organisation based on the British Middle East Command. This might give the Chiefs-of-Staff of the two Western States more work to do—and the NATO gives them a great deal already—but I feel that it would be preferable to so expanding and stretching SHAPE as to paralyse it in exercising the functions of command. Britain has already given way on the subject of the Southern Group (the command under SHAPE in the Western Mediterranean) and agreed that its Commander-in-Chief should be an American admiral. This was a great sacrifice on her part, doubtless made for the sake of harmony.

If, as is reported, the United States is pressing for the command to be extended to take in all the Mediterranean, and for placing our Middle East Command under the orders of this admiral, then I cannot but feel that our broad-minded spirit has been ill-requited. It is also my view that we cannot for ever play the rôle of subservience, and that in this matter, about which we know more than the Americans are likely to learn in the next five years, we ought to make a firm stand, not for our own sake only, but also for theirs.

I should add that Norway and Denmark, as well as France to a lesser degree, object to the admission of Greece and Turkey to the NATO, not because of unfriendly feelings towards them, but because they do not wish to pledge themselves to action in case of a minor form of aggression against them. As I have said, I do not regard a minor form of action as likely so long as Greece and Turkey are allied, but it may be important to meet the objections of the Scandinavian nations. An Eastern Mediterranean Treaty, outside the scope of the North Atlantic Treaty, would give these states an assurance that they would not be called upon for action except in the case of a general war.

This brings up an important consideration which may be behind the

Scandinavian objection to the entry of Greece and Turkey into the North Atlantic Treaty. It is the desire for air bases in Turkey now attributed to the United States Government. There is a wide feeling that the establishment of air bases in a land which actually borders on the Soviet might be regarded as provocative, even if its intention were in fact purely defensive. Hitherto there has been only one contact between Atlantic Treaty States and Soviet Russia, in the extreme north of Norway, which by comparison with the Caucasus is of minor military importance. There appears to be some force in this view. It may be argued that, if Russia meant war, she would choose her own time and place for it. That is probably true, yet the Soviet Government is not immune from nerves, and states under the influence of sudden perturbation sometimes take illogical action. No kind of pact with Turkey must of necessity lead to the establishment of bases on her territory, and the conclusion of a pact is far more pressing than the establishment of bases, supposing them to be in fact required. I suggest that we should pause at the latter point, and that the British Government should make sure that the bold does not merge into the rash.

I have always denied the Left-Wing contention that the United States is dragging the nations of Europe into warlike enterprises. The North Atlantic Treaty bears all the marks of an alliance designed in the first instance to avert war and in the second for defence and self-protection. It is, however, used as the foundation for propaganda to the effect that Russia is being enveloped and even directly threatened, and that the European nations which participate in the North Atlantic Treaty have been made tools of the United States for the furtherance of this policy. What it does seem fair to say is that the United States does not, and cannot, take the European pulse as effectively as Britain. Sometimes, it is true, we make gross mistakes; sometimes we find ourselves at a loss for information; in the main, however, our estimate of tendencies and sentiments has been sound. In the matter of Turkish air bases for American aircraft, it may well be sounder than that of the United States. At least if the step has to be taken, it should be clearly realised that it entails risks.

The strategic features of the Middle East, apart from Greece and Turkey, are the Dardanelles, as important today as ever; the big Greek island of Crete and the big British island of Cyprus; on the African side the bulge of Cyrenaica, which might prove vital to the maintenance of command of the Eastern Mediterranean; the Suez Canal; the narrow Syrian strip which has provided a passage for armies moving between Asia and Africa for thousands of years; the oilfields of Iraq and Persia, now so prominent in the news; and Egypt itself, possessing to a higher degree than any other country in the region the qualifications of a great all-purpose base and centre for reserves. It should be noted that Egypt would remain one of the great strategic points of the world even if the Suez Canal could not be used, even if the Eastern Mediterranean became too dangerous for shipping. It is not enough to say that Egypt is a focal point and a connecting link between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Egypt also provides through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Suez a second line of approach for shipping destined for the Middle East fortress. As I have often put it, the outstanding value of Egypt in strategy is the possession of a back door at Suez as well as a front door at Alexandria and Port Said.

For years now the British and Egyptian Governments have been attempting to regulate their relations by a new treaty. At first sight, the whole question looks simple. Why, it may be asked, if the Egyptians object to the presence of British forces on their soil, should we persist in the attempt to keep them there? The situation is not, however, quite as simple as that. The Egyptian Government is, in fact, conscious of the risks the country would run in the event of a world war, and aware of the value of British power as a defender. In the last war this power saved Egypt from being overrun by Germany, and today Russia stands closer to Alexandria and Cairo than Germany stood in 1939.

On the other hand, the Government—like the Palace and all political parties—is

influenced by the inflammable nationalistic public opinion in Egypt, which may be the decisive factor in internal political struggles. This demands that 'Britain should go.' The discussions between Britain and Egypt have on occasion been warm enough, but the subject is handled across the Council table in very different terms to those used in public speeches and in the press. The atmosphere may have deteriorated lately, but the original attitude of Egypt was that British forces should quit the country, that they should return to defend it when a state of emergency occurred, but that the Egyptian Government should be the sole judge of what constituted a state of emergency and that forces should move in only on its invitation.

No student of military affairs can fail to see the objections which would be inherent in such a plan. Military staffs always try to carry out strategic moves as far as possible before an emergency becomes acute, because of the intense danger by which later movement is beset. A strategic move in emergency is like a tactical march through a defile lined by hostile machine guns. The risk has become greater than ever today owing to the range and power of modern weapons of war; but even today the danger is very much smaller if the forces are already settled in at their stations and have had time to take the necessary precautions. Big strategic moves still have to be made by sea. Air transport is invaluable, but it cannot as yet replace ships in such circumstances. And the Mediterranean constitutes a defile. It might be kept open, but plans could not be permitted to depend upon its remaining open. The maintenance of a force in the Middle East by the Cape route would require about twice the shipping tonnage which would be necessary were the Mediterranean route available. The British point of view surely becomes more reasonable if these considerations are taken into account.

How the matter will work out cannot be foretold. Without Egypt it might still be possible to maintain the Middle East defence, but it would be seriously weakened. There exists no really good substitute for Egypt. Another handicap is the hostility between Egypt and Israel. Israel, like Egypt, possesses the rudiments of industrialisation, extremely valuable from the point of view of defence, though it is more vulnerable. Here, as elsewhere, the planners of Middle East defence have to contend not only with obstacles, but also with continually changing circumstances and with imponderables.

The above does no more than skirt the question. The only side of which I feel able to speak with some confidence is that directly concerning Greece and Turkey. For the rest, I have but attempted to sketch the background and to indicate the surroundings of which planning has to take account.

An American View

Like Jugoslavia, Greece and Turkey are reminders that the trouble with regional pacts is that they have abrupt edges; and that the edges which seem to mark the perimeter of our national interests at one moment are not those which protect our full national interests at another. But the Atlantic Pact exists, and we have made it our main instrument for the defense of Europe. Its importance, nevertheless, lies in the binding word 'Pact,' not in the loose adjective 'Atlantic'. By every system of reckoning, Greece and Turkey constitute today part of the crucial area which, for our own safety, we set out to strengthen and defend. We no longer can accept the paradox that European armies which are well advanced in organization and morale, well prepared in certain major respects to meet Soviet aggression, and which stand side by side, still do not know how they would act in a supreme emergency for their own mutual protection, and for ours. The first step obviously is to arrange for Greece and Turkey to share both the benefits and responsibilities of the community to which they wish and deserve to belong.

From the article 'Eisenhower's Right Flank' by Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Foreign Affairs, *July 1951.*

Our position is a cruel one. Revaluation is now both expedient and right

BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM

ROY HARROD

THIS year marks the turn of the tide in the economic affairs of nations, and the waters of public opinion are choppy and confused. Hitherto the nations have been progressing step by step, through the work of reconstruction; at first there was a great straining of capacity and a strong inflationary tendency; but as time went on, the inflationary pressure died down, production became more regular, easements could be offered to consumers and trading conditions liberalised. But now we have re-armament, and once more the pressure on capacity will be increased and the inflationary trend resumed. Much will depend in the near future on how skilfully the authorities reverse the machinery.

In recent years the countries of Continental Europe have come to place increasing reliance on a tight credit policy for checking inflationary tendencies. This is a notable reversion to old techniques, which until recently had generally been deemed to be outmoded. In Britain during the same period we have adopted a totally different method for reducing inflationary pressure, namely a large budget surplus. We have argued here, I believe correctly, that this has been a much more effective method against inflation than the tight credit policy.

It certainly seemed to carry Britain more rapidly towards a new condition of balance than did the tight credit policy in any European country except Belgium. This difference of policy has been partly due to a different theory of the subject; but it has also been influenced by circumstances. The dogged stoicism of the British taxpayer in carrying a heavy burden and abiding by the law is in contrast with the extreme reluctance of those across the Channel to acquiesce in very heavy taxes and to co-operate with the authorities in securing full and prompt payment. Thus it might well have been politically and psychologically impossible for the Continental governments to obtain through taxation those large budget surpluses which have been the foundation of the British policy. And again, to approach the matter from the other side, Britain has had a national debt far exceeding all others, and a tight credit policy would have raised interest charges to a level that would have made the cost of servicing our debt quite insupportable. In fine, the high interest policy was not available to us, nor the high taxation policy to the Continental authorities.

I think that Britain may be proud of the high taxation and high budget surplus policy which she has so loyally implemented since 1947. We have tackled our internal inflation in the most forthright and manful way available; one cannot resist a slight feeling of impatience when the Continental experts burble about their high interest rates, and are even sometimes so bold as to recommend imitation. We, who have grappled with inflation so much more directly and at the cost of our own comfortable living, cannot be expected to welcome correction by those who adopted more roundabout, less sure and more easy-going methods.

But now all is changed. Mr. Gaitskell has abandoned the budget surplus policy. Rejoinder to the Continentals is taken from us. The disdainful smile must come off our face. Heavy re-armament inevitably entails a large increase of inflationary pressure. What is Britain now doing about inflation? It is true that we have the right to claim that our arms step-up is more rapid than any other on this side of the Atlantic and that in this we still have cause for pride. But still, it should be of concern to us to know whither we are tending. If the old anti-inflation policy, which served us so well, is to be dropped, what other are we putting in its place?

Our position is now really rather a cruel one, and the solution of our problem by no means easy. This very anti-inflationary

policy of budget surplus, austere and correct as it has been, has maintained taxation at a level very near the limit of taxable capacity. It was probably the shortest way to the goal of easement and relaxation, and, but for Korea, we should be beginning to enjoy the fruits of it now. But with defence expenditure so sharply rising, the stern unbending policy of a large budget surplus would require taxation far above the limit of taxable capacity. In fact, the previous high taxation policy presents us with a terrible dilemma now. We have abandoned the large budget surplus, but how then are we to cope with inflation? Are we to sink after all? The success of our anti-inflation policy during the war itself was superb; its achievement since the war has been rather disappointing, but none the less good by comparison with others. Of its very nature it has left us with a most obstinate problem in the face of great premature and unexpected additional burdens.

Now that the budget surplus policy is seemingly at an end, Continental experts may be tempted to pile up with a little more confidence and offer us their high interest rates as a timely recipe. I would not be dogmatic upon the expediency of a slight stiffening here; I am quite sure that any drastic increase of interest rates, in the Continental sense, is out of the question in the face of our heavy national debt. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether in existing circumstances it would be successful. Continental rejoicings at its success in Europe are really related to the last phase of events, the phase of easing off, when the pressures caused by post-war reconstruction were ceasing to be so serious. The Continentals cannot produce evidence that dear money would avail against inflation in face of a re-armament programme such as Britain is now professing to undertake. We did not think dear money a suitable expedient during the second war, and in the wartime task of limiting inflation under the most extreme pressure we achieved by other methods a success that must be an all-time world record. We have that experience to our credit. The forthcoming arms programme will not be nearly so exacting an ordeal; but I venture to think that it will be an ordeal beyond the competence of dear money to cope with.

The purpose of dear money is to reduce capital expenditure. Britain still has in her armoury certain controls by which such a reduction can be effectuated more promptly and extensively than by dear money policy. Controls are a great evil. But as between controls, a word should be said in favour of the kinds of control, like those for checking capital expenditure, which prevent inflation happening, as against the kind of controls, like price and profit limitation, which merely attempt to deal with the symptoms of an inflation that has already happened. The former kinds of control obviate the necessity for many other controls; the latter, on the contrary, give rise to the need for ever more widely ramifying and complicated controls.

If the policy of a budget surplus is truly over, far greater stress should now be laid on the urgent need to prevent all capital expenditures that are not directly required for the defence effort. We may bring to bear direct policy decisions in the nationalised sector, the refusal of building permits to private enterprise and the control of materials which are specifically needed for capital extensions.

While our domestic anti-inflation policy has until this year been fairly vigorous, our external economic policy has been a series of fatal errors and has seemed to follow no coherent line of thought. In the early stages we had the bad handling of the sterling balances and of the sterling convertibility experiment in 1947. Last year we should have relaxed restrictions on dollar imports, both here and in the outer sterling area, as soon as the external balance of the sterling area took a more favourable turn. We were under heavy pledge to the Americans to do so, as soon as circumstances allowed. Had we done so, while still receiving Marshall Aid, the Americans would by no means have thought this an improper relaxation for a country enjoying that aid; on the contrary, they would have rejoiced, since one of their main reasons for according Marshall Aid was precisely in order to allow us to do this very thing—the reduction or abolition of discrimination against dollar imports. Had

we done so, we should have pleased the Americans, accumulated a good stock of materials in 1950 when they were cheaper, and should probably still be enjoying Marshall Aid; we should now have the materials and Marshall Aid as well, instead of having a lot of extra gold with Marshall Aid discontinued.

Although the arms programme is likely, unless the whole international situation changes, to be the principal cause of inflation here at home during the next few years, the inflationary tendencies at present prevailing are due mainly to external causes. There is a world-wide inflation in relation to primary products, of which Britain is an importer. It is this inflation coming from outside that is setting us our most awkward problems at the moment.

On the one hand, there is the rise of import prices which is gradually working through to the retail end. There will be a continuation of insistent demands for higher pay, and some danger of 'spiral' inflation. Higher rates of pay, as and when granted, will come on top of high external prices and add momentum to the upward trend of retail prices.

There is an even more serious problem in this connection. British export prices have not risen in proportion to import prices; our producers and traders are not to be blamed for showing some restraint in their pricing policy. The consequence is that we have to produce more exports to buy the same quantity of imports as before. This is not a negligible matter. If we had to pay by our exports for as many imports as we so paid for in 1949, we should have at the present levels of prices of each to export more than £500,000,000 worth of extra goods. This would be an unbearable strain on our factory capacity, and we shall not do it. Our failure to do it will make the British trade balance adverse. But we are already exporting much more than would be needed if the terms of trade had not turned against us; this imposes a strain on our factory capacity, creates congestion, and will impede the arms programme.

If we could restore the terms of trade to a better level, this would have as much effect in reducing the strain on our economy and the inflationary pressure as a budget surplus of, say, £200,000,000 or £300,000,000. It would be a very substantial contribution towards the solution of the problem in front of us.

The British balance of trade will get worse. But our authorities cannot allow it to deteriorate by more than a certain amount. There will be a point at which they will have to insist on high priority for exports, lest the balance fall below a certain level. This priority is bound to impede our arms effort. If the terms of trade could be improved, we could achieve the same balance of trade (which I assume will be slightly adverse in any case) by a smaller volume of exports. This reduction in the volume of exports would release factory capacity for the arms effort and reduce the inflationary danger.

The devaluation of 1949 was one of our big mistakes. It was inevitable when it came, but was the result of mistakes made in the earlier years. It was not called for even in 1949 by the trading position of Britain. Our foreign trade was in over-all balance in 1948 and 1949; even our trade on dollar account showed a smaller deficit, measured in commodities, than we had in 1938. If one judges the matter by costs in this country, one may notice that gold wages here had not risen nearly as much prior to devaluation as they had in the United States; American gold wages had risen some forty-six per cent more than ours. This could hardly have been justified by the excess in the rise of American productivity over the rise in ours; this suggests that from the point of labour costs, sterling was not over-valued at $4.03.

The trouble in 1949 was that, owing to our world-wide position as a banker, we were feeling the brunt of a large proportion of the world-wide dollar shortage. We had to pay out on the dollar deficits of other countries. The undue dollar expenditures of those other countries was partly due to the antecedent policy of Britain in relation to foreign-held sterling balances. By 1949 those were old mistakes, and as the position had by then developed, Britain could not both retain her banking position and avoid devaluation. It was probably right in all the circumstances to accept devaluation. But it is important to note that it was not justified by Britain's internal

position, and indeed set her currency in disequilibrium with the dollar.

Now her international banking position has changed out of recognition. This is not mainly due to the devaluation itself, but to other forces—notably greater economy by the outer sterling area in dollar purchases and the rise of prices of many sterling area exports since Korea. Britain devalued in order to preserve her position as international banker and to impose some kind of discipline on overseas countries; in doing so, she upset her own position. Now that the international position has straightened out, she should reverse the process in order to restore her own position.

I will not discuss the technique of revaluation, which should probably be a cautious step-by-step process. By it, Britain could effectuate a considerable restoration in her terms of trade. This would release factory capacity for the arms drive and increase the efficiency of industry by reducing the congestion of orders. It would also check, and possibly reverse, the rising tendency of retail prices and thus reduce the danger of a wage and price spiral developing. The dangers of inflationary developments, as things are, must not be taken lightly.

There is a great prejudice against revaluation on the ground that frequent chops and changes are bad for confidence and the prestige of sterling. Did we not have devaluation only two years ago? It is very important, therefore, in this connection to emphasise that the devaluation was itself an aberration, forced on us, it is true, by the ineluctable pressure of circumstances in 1949, but none the less a move that took our currency out of equilibrium. Consequently, revaluation should be represented not as a mere expedient to ease a given situation, but as the correction of a past lapse.

Furthermore, in presenting revaluation to the world, we should make it plain that we were taking our stand on a fixed principle—namely, stability in the commodity value of our currency. Inflation is rampant in the world; it should certainly be our policy to do all we can to secure international co-operation to prevent that; but it is also our duty, if and to the extent that world inflation cannot be prevented, to preserve the commodity value of our own currency. At this juncture that can only be done by a revaluation of it. It is both expedient and right for us to insulate ourselves from world-wide inflation and to preserve sterling against deterioration.

In 1949 a good many other countries came with us in devaluation over all or part of the way. It is not certain how many would join us in the reverse movement. South Africa, it must be admitted, would not do so. This need not loosen her sterling connection, since the Australian pound was long since devalued against the British pound without any loosening in the connection there. Pessimists hold that not many countries would want to come with us, and that sterling would lose prestige if we revalued with but few companions. Actually, the technical effect of improving our terms of trade, which we so much need for our own sake, would probably be stronger, the fewer our companions in revaluation. It is a mistake to suppose that the prestige effect would be bad. The determination to preserve the commodity value of sterling against deterioration would be impressive; the international prestige of sterling will not suffer if it is seen that the British Government is quite determined to prevent a decline in its value. We should stand on a principle. We should refuse to let our currency go to pieces. Accordingly, in existing circumstances, we should raise the dollar parity.

The agreement of the International Monetary Fund would have to be obtained. The arguments in favour of sterling revaluation from the point of view of an orderly world currency are so strong that I do not believe that it would be difficult to secure agreement. Britain's internal inflationary difficulties, as outlined in the earlier part of this article, are highly relevant to the argument and should be stated. Our dilemma is a grave one. We seek to put through a great arms programme in the common cause of freedom; we must not be impeded in that by the present effects of past errors and mismanagement.

'The straight line is man's line; the curve is God's.' Señor Cirici, the distinguished Catalan critic, writes on the great 'biological' architect of Barcelona

ANTONI GAUDI

ALEXANDRE CIRICI-PELLICER

THE driving force behind the development of art and culture is the artist, but there have always been two kinds of artists—those who concentrate on the nature and needs of their material and draw from it both the form and the content of their work, even if this means cutting themselves off from the tendencies of their time, and those who keep more closely in touch with the outside world, and have the genius to give a shape and form and even, for the time being, a passionate seriousness to the desires of the society in which they live.

In architecture during the last hundred years there has been a strong creative line of the second kind. We would all admit it, I think, in the mediævalism of Ruskin, Morris and Viollet-le-Duc, the *style nouveau* of Hanker, Horta and Guimard, the secessionism of Otto Wagner, Loos and Olbirch, the Perrets and their experiments in concrete, the rationalism of Corbusier and Gropius, and the organic architecture of Weight and Aalto.

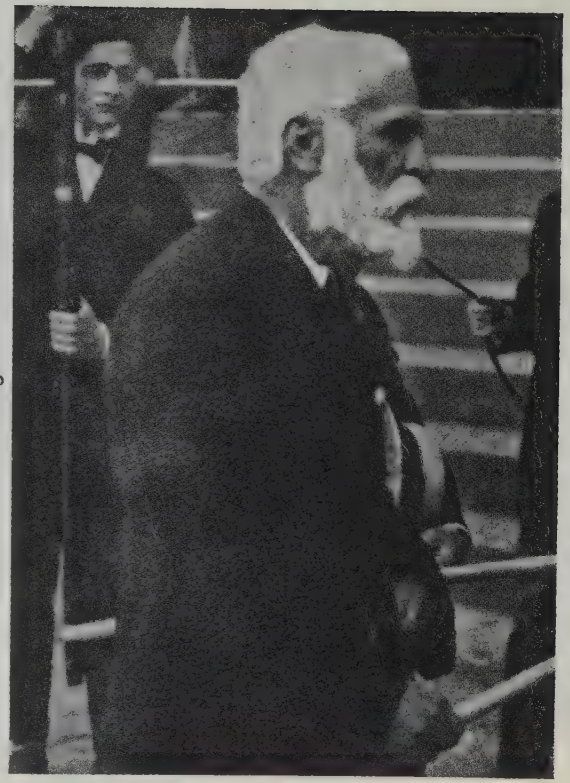
But apart from this line of architecture, which we can call historical because it is closely related to the evolution of the modern world, stand isolated figures, a-historical men, who worked not on the surface of things, but in the depths, and so have remained in obscurity. They are discovered, if at all, long afterwards. There have been such artists at all times in all the arts. Giorgione, El Greco and Lautreamont are today essential landmarks in the history of the arts and yet they were ignored for years. Gaudi is such an artist.

Antoni Gaudi i Cornet[1] was born on 25 June 1852 in the *Carrer de L'Amarguesa* —Bitterness Street—in the Catalonian town of Reus. His father was a blacksmith and metal craftsman in Ruidoms, a neighbouring village. At seventeen Antoni went to Barcelona to study architecture. He did consistently badly in his examinations, for he was already at heart one of those who don't 'fit in'. The classes at the School of Architecture were uninspiring, so he felt, and worse still showed, no interest in them, but instead went regularly to the lectures of Llorens i Barba on Philosophy and Pau Milà i Fontanals on Aesthetics.

Milà i Fontanals had lived as a young man in the Rome of the Romantics and had been, with Overbeck, one of the Nazarean group. Then he developed a passion for the Middle Ages, for symbolism, mystery and even a certain amount of esotericism. In England, such tendencies led to Pre-Raphaelism, but in Catalonia a return to the Middle Ages and the cult of folk-lore and nature led inevitably to nationalism. Gaudi remained a Catalan patriot to the end of his days, and was once, though by then old and famous, arrested and imprisoned by the Spanish police for attending the annual Mass offered for those who died fighting for the independence of Catalonia. These romantic ideas made a permanent impression on Gaudi; from them came his veneration for the ideals of collective craftsmanship and honesty in art, his belief, which he shared with Viollet, in the logic of architecture, his use of nature as a source of inspiration not only for *décor*, but for the buildings themselves and his fondness for primitive popular forms.

During his last years at the University, Gaudi worked as a student assistant to Villar and Fontseré, the architects of the Abbey Church at Montserrat and the Cascades in Barcelona's *Parc de la Ciutadella*. The decorative motifs he produced for the Church are highly stylised, almost Japanese, but he designed and executed the ironwork for the Cascades with a skill which he must have learnt in his father's foundry, and which showed that he was not to be one of those mere 'designers' who have debased the profession of architect ever since the Renaissance.

[1] *In Catalan, as in Spanish, everyone has two surnames joined by the conjunction 'i': the first is the father's, the second the mother's, but usually only the first is used*



Antoni Gaudi in 1925

Parc Guëll: Gate Lodge *1900–1914*

Casa Battlò (1905), Barcelona

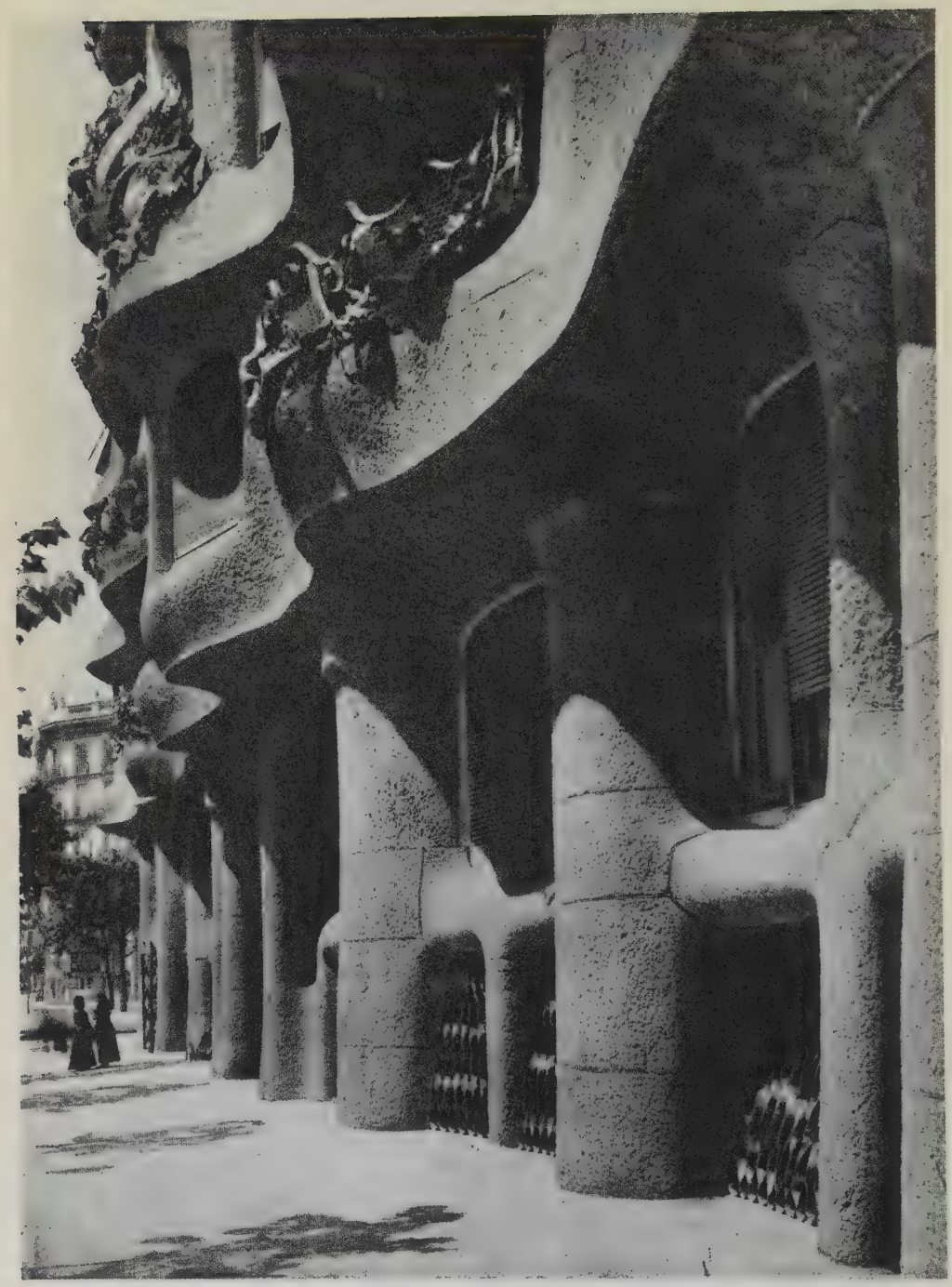
Only a few of the flats in this block still contain the original furniture designed (with every other detail) by Gaudi. Tables and bureaux fit the undulating sea-cavern-like walls. Gaudi represents a dynamic impulse in nouveau art, the 'wave of life', which included all living plants and creatures in architecture—columns like trees, roofs like snow—and gave buildings their own life of stone. Outside Barcelona this impulse can only be seen palely in, for instance, the entrances to the Paris Metro

Casa Battlò. Interior

The asymmetrical arch was the key to Gaudi's construction, and with its suggestion of a wave-worn rock is the most distinctive feature of his work

The Church of the Colonia Guëll, Santa Coloma de Cervello (1898)
Where trunks of stone and brick grow from the dimly-lit floor

Right
Detail of the façade of the Nativity, the only completed face of the Sagrada Familia. Note the gesture of the new-born baby's hands



Casa Milà (*called* La Pedrera, *the quarry*) *Paseo de Gracia, Barcelona*

'Simply an enormous piece of sculpture pierced by windows appearing as eyes or mouths.' Gaudi's traditional skill appears in the exquisite wrought-iron work

He passed his final examinations in 1871 and in the same year (at the age of twenty-six) he built the *Casa Vicens* in the *Carrer de les Carolines de Gracia.* There is a suggestion of Moorish influence in the alternate sections of stone and brick and the glittering, coloured ceramics, but the building as a whole had the merit, in an eclectic age, of belonging to no known style. In the *Casa Vicens* his fascination with natural forms appears only in the decoration—iron palm-leaves as window grilles and china ivy and strawberry fronds woven among the beams of the ceilings. But when he designed the new lamp standards for the *Plaça Reial* in Barcelona, he reproduced exactly the natural form of trees with the brackets springing like branches.

In 1883 Gaudi received the commission for the *Sagrada Familia.* It was originally to have been built by Villar who had laid the foundations and drawn a set of plans in the neo-Gothic style. Gaudi tore up these plans, but, even so, the first part of the church to be finished—the apse—has something Gothic about it, although the moulding and the detail can only be described as a very free interpretation of nature. His next undertaking was the front of the east transept, which was to represent the Nativity. It has three porches, opening out of four square towers. These towers merge into each other, and then from a circular base curve and taper upwards to a height of nearly 350 feet, where they end in a series of complicated figures; all shining with mosaic over the porches stand sculptures representing episodes in the childhood of Jesus; beneath them under gables dripping with stone snow, Gaudi has created a teeming world of animals and plants.

During this period Gaudi also built the *Palau Guëll* in the (*Calle Conde del Asalto*). Gaudi developed his own individual style which was conceived solely for construction in stone and steel and which incorporated all his technical discoveries, in particular the parabolic arch. The *Palau Guëll* and the plans he drew for a missionary colony in Tangier (a forest of circular buildings crowned by narrow parabolic cupolas) were his first steps away from all the historical styles of architecture towards his own 'biological' style.

He then spent a summer with the Bishop of Astorga. This was the turning-point in his life. He left Barcelona a fashionable and business-like young man; he returned deeply religious and contemptuous of the world, with the almost mystical conviction that the building of the *Sagrada Familia* was the purpose of his life.

Before devoting himself entirely to this object, however, he found time to build the *Casa Calvet* in the *Passeig de Gracia*, usually called the House of Bones, from the shape of the columns supporting the balconies. The façade is undulating, glittering with sea-coloured mosaics; the roof, covered with ceramic tiles, curves like the back of a prehistoric monster. He also designed a church for the *Colònia Guëll*, a working-class model estate near Santa Coloma de Cervello. This was the first time he used his new system of designing upside down. From a board representing the ground-plan, he hung a series of threads. To the threads was attached a weight proportional to the load which the columns were required to bear. The polygons formed by the loaded threads were secured, turned upright, and there he had, in miniature, the outline of the arches he would need. By this means Gaudi was able to do away with supports and flying buttresses; the whole weight of his buildings was taken on exactly angled pillars. A good example of its application is the vast colonnade in the *Parc Guëll*, originally designed as the market for a garden-suburb. Gaudi's last lay work, the *Casa Mila* in the *Passeig de Gracia*, built in 1905, is a refinement of his use of natural forms. This building, which is quite plain, is simply an enormous piece of sculpture, with curved surfaces, swelling into undulating horizontal ledges, the shape of eyebrows or lips, pierced by windows appearing as eyes or mouths. The nearest approach to it is a work by Henry Moore or Barbara Hepworth.

From 1914 to 1926 Gaudi thought of nothing but the *Sagrada Familia.* He designed the nave, with pillars acutely angled and rough like the bark of trees, and vaults formed by the intersection of

[1] *The greatest of the many 'Churches of Atonement' in Barcelona, built in repentance for riot and sacrilege*

the hyperbolas—surfaces which he regarded as symbols of the Trinity because they were formed by one infinite straight line intersecting two others.

The final plan of the church envisaged twelve towers more than 300 feet high, symbols of the Apostles, surrounding four even taller ones, representing the Evangelists, and in the centre the great tower of the Saviour, over 500 feet high.

Gaudi's life was his work; apart from it there was little else. He lived simply, in a house in the *Parc Güell* and walked two miles every day to his office. Every evening he walked another three miles to see his confessor in the monastery of *Sant Felip Neri*. He dressed very poorly, ate practically nothing. As far as we know, he was in love only once, and he only spoke about it once to the poet Joan Maragall. When a young man, he fell in love with a German girl who paid a short visit to Barcelona. He proposed to her, but she said she was already engaged and he went away without saying another word. Three years later, still without saying a word to anyone, he went to her native town in Germany. He did not know her address, and made no attempt to find it out. He was quite certain that he would see her somewhere and that was all he wanted. For four days he walked about the town, looking in at all the windows, listening to the voices, but saw or heard no sign of her. At the last moment, while waiting for the train back to Spain, he asked a porter if he knew of her family. The porter pointed out a fine new house which the girl's father had built for his daughter and new son-in-law. After a moment of hesitation, Gaudi boarded the train. As it pulled out of the station, it passed the house, and on a veranda he saw the silhouette of a woman. He had seen what he came to see, and he burst into tears.

Towards the end of his life, Gaudi spent most of his time in a little office on the site of the *Sagrada Familia*. On the evening of 6 June 1926, he bade goodnight to his workmen, saying 'Tomorrow we will do great things', and set off as usual to Sant Felip Neri. On the way, he was knocked down by a train. He was taken to hospital where nobody knew who the shabby old man was, and there he died the following morning. When the news reached the district of the *Sagrada Familia*, every house went into mourning.

Gaudi used to say: *The straight line is man's line; the curve is God's.* Starting from a simple plastic system of curves between rigid elements, he created his own form of 'biological' plastics. On to these he superimposed a prodigious chromatic expressionism, using facings of ceramic mosaic. He made *collages* long before Picasso or D'Ernst. In the *Parc Güell*, for instance, we find black vaults glittering with gold, but on looking closely we notice that the luxurious effect is achieved by crumpled balls of chocolate-paper glued on to the black mosaic. Again, there is a baroque pattern of white spirals on the walls and ceilings which is made of earthenware plates smashed into little bits. There are small china dolls, green glass bottles, wine-glasses with their stems hanging from the ceiling and making a curiously effective transparent bas-relief; all this combined with a series of wonderfully varied abstract motifs in polychrome crystal mosaic, which remind one of some of Miro's compositions.

From the purely plastic point of view Gaudi worked by preference (particularly in the *Parc Güell* and the *Colònia Güell*) with paraboloids or spirals, with hyperboloid columns in revolution, but in his work these forms are never mere geometrical abstractions; on the contrary, they keep their extremely close relationship with living natural forms, the convolutions of the brain, the pelvic cavity, the profile of the butterfly's wings, flower petals, cheekbones and so on. Critics have drawn attention to the atavism of his ideas, their haunting shadow of dark caves and primitive huts and childish nightmares. It is true that with his obsession with nature there went a sense of horror, and some people cannot look at his work without a feeling of *malaise*. In this direction Gaudi touches the borderline of surrealism, and we may find surrealism too in the *objets dépaysés* of his sculpture. Certainly his work, severely grounded though it is on practical considerations, is the only architecture of our time which is fierce, passionate and touched with poetic madness.

Since the war Germany has produced only two great political personalities, Dr. Adenauer and Dr. Schumacher—both of them intolerant autocrats

A TALE OF TWO AUTOCRATS

BRIAN CONNELL

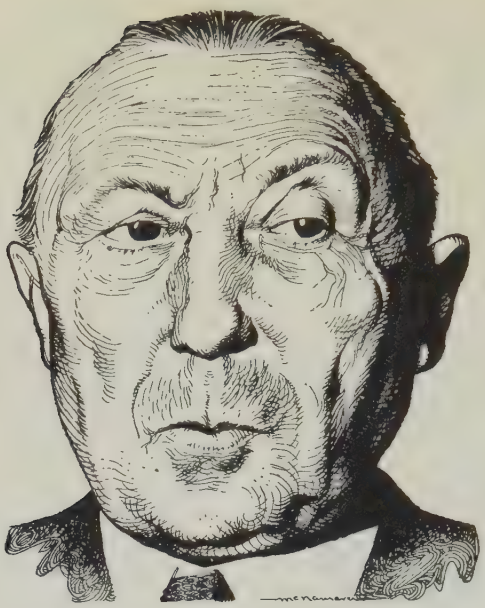
Dr. Konrad Adenauer is the first German Chancellor to visit England since Bruening came to London during the reparations crisis twenty years ago. The intervening two decades saw the eclipse of the Weimar Republic, the collapse of Hitler and the relapse into democratic forms at Bonn. Yet public opinion in England knows little of this survivor of the 'twenties, who has become the regenerator of the 'fifties. Adenauer has had a long and difficult course since the war, and the recent international recognition of his personality and position is perhaps an acknowledgement of the formidable problems with which he and his colleagues in Western Germany are faced.

The thin defences of democracy in Germany are being held by fewer and worse troops than sufficed to lose them in 1933. Nowhere does the tragedy of the missing generation hit the country more woundingly than in the calibre of the men whom post-capitulation political life has brought into positions of responsibility. Germany's tragedy is that too few of the surviving democrats are good politicians, and a bare handful of the few able politicians are good democrats. In the forcing-house atmosphere in which the Western Allies have tried to put the *troisième force* on its feet again, Germany has produced only two major political personalities—Konrad Adenauer, leader of the Christian Democrats, and Kurt Schumacher, the Socialist leader. Both are intolerant autocrats, yet no two more contrasting individuals can be imagined.

It must have been in the early autumn of 1946 when I first met Adenauer, in one of the private gatherings which our naval intelligence people used to hold in what had been my own last wartime base of operations, a house on the River Elbe in Hamburg. These meetings took place more or less by special licence, at a time when non-fraternisation was still official policy. Adenauer at that time had just consolidated his position as leader of the Christian Democrats in the British Zone of Germany. He had had an unfortunate experience which has certainly soured his sub-conscious as far as the British are concerned. Re-appointed to the honoured post of Oberbuergermeister of Cologne, from which he had been dismissed by the Nazis in 1933, Adenauer fell foul of the local British Corps Commander and was not only deprived a second time of the position of which he has always been most proud, but was, in fact, forbidden all political activity. There seemed to be some suspicion that he was toying with the old Napoleonic idea of a Confederation of the Rhine, united with a friendly France.

Our Political Division quickly lifted the political ban with profuse apologies, but it was felt that the Lord Mayor's job should go to someone younger and more active. Adenauer's answer has been to show himself the most active and fertile Right-Wing politician in Germany. I remember being struck at the first meeting by the high, serene brow, the curious Mongoloid cheekbones and the bright intelligent eyes of this spare, reserved septuagenarian. At a time when the propagation of political panaceas reached hysteria pitch in any private gathering, he was quiet, dignified, clipped in speech and to the point. The curious inverted diphthongs of his Rhineland accent, which he has never lost in spite of his twelve years as President of the Prussian State Council, forced one's attention as much as the clarity of his mind and his unexpected gifts as a witty causeur.

His power is a difficult one to define, and his personality a difficult one to sketch. He can be of a demanding and forbidding sternness, or of an almost childlike spontaneity. He is no dialectician and certainly no demagogue—a man passionate in the



Dr. Konrad Adenauer

honesty of his belief in the overall blessings of a slightly old-fashioned form of Conservatism, yet who can get a curious forced note of insincerity into his speeches before an audience. Adenauer is the great *routinier* of Germany's post-war politics, the general manager, rather than the firebrand, of his party. So tightly has he spun the web from the Right Wing of the Christian Democrats under such men as Alois Hundhammer in Bavaria and the Ruhr industrial managers, to radical-minded colleagues like Jakob Kaiser and Karl Arnold, another Christian Trade Unionist, who is Minister President of North-Rhine Westphalia, that he has become absolutely indispensable.

This son of quite poor parents has acquired the manner and appearance of an elderly gentleman. At seventy-five his back is ramrod-straight, his mind clear, and his capacity to endure all-night sittings certainly as great as his opponents'. He does not get his way by pounding the table; he uses men by flattering them, charming them with silky good humour, or freezing them with quiet contempt. There is in him the tendency towards intolerance which seems a characteristic of almost every German politician. His ambitions, and he is a very ambitious man, spring less from a belief in party doctrine than from a belief in himself. When he is asked if he can get Cabinet approval for a particular measure, he is apt to say bluntly: 'Don't worry, I am at least seventy per cent of that Cabinet.'

He was born on 5 January 1876, in Cologne, and took up the study of law when he left school. In 1906 he became City Councillor and in 1909 Alderman. In 1917, when the First World War was causing angry mutterings in the hungry Ruhr and Rhineland, he was appointed Cologne's Lord Mayor, a post which he held until 1933. With his Presidency of the Prussian State Council and his membership of the Committee of the Zentrum Party, he was at one time earning more than the President of the Republic. In the twenties he was known as one of the three most powerful men in the Prussia of the Weimar Republic, and—a little-known fact from his past career which may do much to explain the almost embittered single-mindedness of his four-year, post-war rise from being just another party politician to Chancellor of the Federal Republic—

was asked by President Hindenburg in the inflation days of 1926 to form a Cabinet, an attempt which foundered on his inability to reconcile warring colleagues.

The Nazis harried him into obscurity. After dismissing him from all his offices when they came to power, they arrested him in 1934 during the Roehm Putsch. He was soon set free and lived in complete retirement with his wife and five children, one of whom is a priest. The outbreak of war in 1939 found him in Switzerland and on the Nazis' black list for immediate arrest. He was, however, able to return when things started going well for Hitler and remained unmolested until the wave of arrests which followed the 20th of July attempt on Hitler's life in 1944. He is very fond of rubbing both the Communists' and the Socialists' noses in the fact that they were not the only ones who spent a spell in concentration camps. He has a profound distaste for Socialism. 'To many people Socialism is all right, only National Socialism is bad. I say Socialism, if it runs its course, must ultimately become National Socialism', is one of his remarks.

Above all, Adenauer believes quite simply in Germany. Although he has many of the personal characteristics of Hindenburg, he is no Prussian, and, as do most Rhinelanders, he despises the Prussians' harshness and brutality of thought. He is genuinely determined to check Right-Wing radicalism, yet is himself at heart an autocrat. He is a devout Roman Catholic, a matter of political importance barely to be appreciated in England, except perhaps amongst the Lancashire Irish, yet his party depends for its existence on its strong Protestant contingent. He rejects the Socialists' welfare state, yet his party's Official programme contains marked welfare state features; Adenauer himself has often stated that capitalism must assume 'social responsibilities', although his wealthy backers in the Ruhr dislike the innovations, such as profit-sharing plans and management-labour councils, which have been introduced under the aegis of the Allies.

Adenauer has more enemies than friends, but—and this is decisive in politics—he has more supporters than he has opponents. In fact, none of them have really made up their minds whether he is a trustworthy old gentleman whose Catholic Conservative background has given him a masterly grasp of the political game, or whether he is an old fox whose obstinacy is only matched by his capacity for tortuous intrigue. The four years of his Chancellorship will show which appreciation is correct. 'There is only one Adenauer', says his chauffeur, who is convinced that his employer is a good Chancellor. The chauffeur's name is Schumacher.

KURT SCHUMACHER

His namesake, the great, turbulent demagogue, who is head of Germany's Social Democrat Party, is not of the same opinion. Dr. Kurt Schumacher, a man of brilliant natural intelligence himself, does not underrate that of his adversary; he just questions his motives. What a contrast these two men are! Much the same height, much the same build, except that Schumacher's thirteen years in a concentration camp have lost him a leg, threaten to lose him the other, and have permanently shattered his health. The First World War left him with only one arm, now usually clutched round a secretary or his good hefty friend, Franz Neumann from Berlin, as he makes his way between appointments, his spine contorted with exhaustion and pain. His bitter, lined face, his blazing eyes and cropped hair alone would make Schumacher an unforgettable personality. Where this frail, racked body has derived the strength with which to rebuild Germany's great Socialist Party is one of the wonders of German politics. Yet I have seen him come out of an all-night conference of his party caucus and talk a group of newspapermen, many of them hostile, into the ground, so that not one had another query or question to raise. The sheer force of his intellect and will-power make him not only an unforgettable personality but a haunting, almost a terrifying, one.

The man who stood up in the Reichstag in 1932 and howled down the Nazis with his famous taunt that their programme appealed only to the inner swinishness in mankind, and then lived through fifteen years of prison and sickness to call the

Dr. Kurt Schumacher

Communists red-lacquered Nazis, has had the most difficult task of any post-war German politician. Adenauer found many orthodox Conservative elements still alive, while the moneyed and middle classes, still twitching from nearly two decades of anti-Russian propaganda, flocked to support his rag-bag Christian Democrat party. Schumacher came back from Dachau to try and re-knit a party which had been second only to the Communists in the savage assaults made on its members by the Nazis.

He found literally nothing. He was the only survivor of the four Socialist Horsemen in the 1933 Reichstag. Haubach and Leber were executed after the plot of 20 July, and Mierendorff died in one of the last bombing attacks. The Trade Unions had been forcibly incorporated into Doctor Ley's *Arbeitsfront*, their funds requisitioned and dispersed. Their former officials were old, or demoralised, or dead. There were the Red-Army-backed Communists, whom Schumacher hates with a ripe and savage hatred, to fight within the working classes. Somehow, from the bomb-damaged building in Hanover's Odeonstrasse, this incandescent skeleton of a man brought the Social Democrat Party back into being.

The eleven years in Nazi concentration camps have marked not only his body but his mind. He has become bitter and very, very hard. He has no mercy on himself, his health, his secretaries, his supporters or his opponents. He has the richest, most scathing and most wounding vocabulary of any Western German politician, and to hear him really lambaste a political opponent is a shrivelling experience. His creed is simple; it is Socialism for the Ruhr, Socialism for Germany, Socialism for everyone wherever possible. He sees and will recognise no other way out of Germany's economic difficulties. 'Democracy in Germany has just about the strength of the Social Democratic Party', he says. It is a programme that admits of little compromise, a faculty never strong in the political German.

Born in West Prussia, having worked in South Germany, Berlin, Hanover, and now the Rhineland, he sees Germany as a unit and condemns all forms of separatism and federalism. Yet, though his thoughts centre on Germany's problems today, he has shown in his speeches that he still believes in internationalism. He looks not only towards the British Labour Party, but to the French Socialists for support. This

gaunt fifty-five-year-old began his political career in the early twenties. He was a columnist in a Stuttgart Socialist newspaper and sat from 1924–31 in the Würtemberg State Council. He was first elected to the Reichstag in 1930. In March 1933, the Nazis arrested him, dragged him through the concentration camps of Heuberg, Kuhberg, Dachau and Flossenburg, until they felt sure enough of their strength and his weakness to release him in August 1943, only to put him behind barbed wire again after the plot of 20 July. He arrived in Hanover in 1945 with stomach ulcers, without a tooth in his head and nearly blind. Instead of resting, he plunged straight into political work again. When, in 1948, his shattered body had to endure the amputation of a leg, due to circulation trouble, brought on by his concentration camp experiences, it seemed as if this would be too much even for his superhuman will-power to withstand. He remained almost *incommunicado* for a year in one room in the party headquarters, to emerge, roaring fire with greater vigour than ever, in time for the 1949 election campaign.

Often the very shrillness of Schumacher's phrases, his clear division of everything into black and white, and his concern for the welfare of all Germany's working classes, give his public utterances a nationalistic tone such as in other contexts he would be the first to execrate. In quieter moments he will explain that he prefers to canalise nationalistic feeling into his own party, where it can be controlled, rather than allow less reliable political elements to use the arguments as a plank. But Schumacher's tremendous qualities are likely in the end to prove his faults. He has become more than man-size, this pulsating embodiment of what happened to an intelligent opponent under the Nazis. Watching him in the Bonn Parliament, it sometimes seems that he will never make the step from demagogue and organiser to statesman. He has an unbridled tongue, fierce and ineradicable passions, and a deep-rooted suspicion that the bourgeois forces which once gave financial aid and succour to Hitler will one day do the same to some other man or party who would finally destroy him and his kind.

CARLO SCHMID

The voice of Social Democracy in the German Parliament, the smooth-tongued statesmanlike voice which Schumacher lacks, belongs to mountainous Carlo Schmid, Professor of Law from Tuebingen University, who looks so unlike a Professor and seems so unlike a Socialist that his personality rewards a little study. Of all Germany's post-war politicians he has the steepest career behind him, and at fifty-four, probably before him. He was born of a German professor father and a French mother in Perpignan in Southern France, and is completely bi-lingual. Some idea of the massiveness of his character may be gained from the fact that he was German Military Governor of Lille during the war, and became so respected that he was immediately requested by the French to take up a ministerial post in one of the states of their Zone after the capitulation.

He first came into real public prominence after his appointment as one of the Social Democrat delegates to the Constituent Assembly which thrashed out the new German Constitution at Bonn in 1949, where he became the Chairman of the main committee. It is said of Schmid that he has worked on his personality for thirty years, like a goldsmith on a work of art. Now he is ready and is placing himself on exhibition. He is far from being a typical German. His immense bulk—he is a good six feet three inches tall, and he must be nearly two yards round the middle—would pass muster, but from the great head which rests on this massive torso comes an unending stream of aphorisms, *bons mots*, graceful classical quotations and allusions and a stream of comment in lighter vein on every conceivable topic, which owes far more to his mother than to his father. He dazzles the Germans rather than earns their admiration and they believe him to be a born Social Democrat only as long as they hear him talking about it.

Schmid is, in fact, a perfectly good radical Liberal, from one of those quite comfortably off, highly intelligent, professorial families, which are such a feature of southern German university towns. His personal charm is overwhelming, his liking

for good wine and good food a bye-word. He and his chief are poles apart, but the ascetic Schumacher and the Rabelaisian Schmid have one thing in common—the level of their intelligence. But, like many Bohemians, Schmid lacks the common touch. Should he ever acquire it, European Social Democracy will have in him one of its most important, certainly its most individually intelligent, protagonists.

Almost alone of West Germany's politicians he has put into resonant phrases the new relationship between government and opposition which it is their first duty, after fifteen years in the political wilderness, to find. He alone has had the moral courage to stand up in a silent Bundestag and remind the Germans of the moral debt they owe to the world for the internal and external crimes of Hitler, and it was he who put in palatable form the philosophical premises for the inclusion of Germany in the peaceful co-operation of the European Assembly.

ERNST REUTER

Schmid's chief rival for the reversion of the Social Democrat leadership is a man who shares with Schumacher the privilege of being the German politician best hated by the Russians—Ernst Reuter, Oberbuergermeister of the three Western Sectors of Berlin. Adenauer and all his Right-Wing cohorts the Russians dismiss as malicious pluto-democrats; Schumacher is reserved an inner circle of hell for his part in preventing the Russian-sponsored Socialist Unity Party from repeating their python act with the East Zone Social Democrats in Western Germany, but for Reuter there stands ready the hottest Marxist cauldron of all, that kept at white heat for renegade Communists. A son of well-to-do parents, he joined the then arch-revolutionary Social Democratic party in 1912. After they had betrayed the revolutionary ideals of those days and supported the Kaiser, Reuter returned from a Russian prisoner-of-war camp a fervent admirer of Lenin. With him came Wilhelm Pieck, now 'Fuehrer' of the Communist State which the Russians have set up in the Eastern Zone of Germany.

By 1921 he was General Secretary of the Communist Party of Germany. Then, one day, he walked out of the office in No. 24 Muenzstrasse and into the Social Democrat headquarters in No. 3 Lindenstrasse to become the chief political commentator on the party newspaper. It was as if Lenin had suddenly become the managing director of I.C.I., and the Russians have never forgiven him. By 1933 Reuter was Oberbuergermeister of Magdeburg, but when the Nazis packed him off to a concentration camp, he was rescued through British intervention, and today his son Harry is a Professor in Manchester University. Reuter then obtained a post as transport adviser to the Turkish Government and, after a few years in Ankara, displayed another facet of his many-sided talents, when he was appointed as expert member of a committee engaged in reforming and Westernising the Turkish language.

In November 1946, the British authorities facilitated his return to Germany, at the request of Social Democrat headquarters, and after the June 1947 municipal elections he should have become Berlin's Lord Mayor, but the Russians vetoed his appointment. It was only after Berlin was irrevocably split into two halves that he could take up his appointment and then for the three Western Sectors only.

Immensely popular with the Berliners, intensely admired by the Western Germans for the inspiring lead he gave the cold and hungry inhabitants of the capital in the fearsome blockade winter of 1948–49, Reuter probably did more to convince the outside world of the basic existence of a German will for the democratic way of life than any other man. His present rôle has become a little uncertain; now that Berlin has become a problem rather than a symbol, his influence is less marked than it was. But if Schumacher's health were finally to break down, the party choice between two men of great intelligence might still fall on Reuter, the administrator, rather than Schmid, the dialectician.

The Socialists in Germany have a more recognisably able reserve team than do their opponents—men like Erich Ollenhauer, the good committee chairman, quiet, efficient, an able administrator; Fritz Heine, the publications chief who spent most of the war in England, and Waldemar von Knoeringen, Bavarian

provincial chief, who was a teacher at the German prisoner-of-war school at Wilton Park, both of them young men with a considerable future. Several of the personalities in the State Governments, like Ministers President Christian Stock in Hesse, Hinrich Kopf in Lower Saxony, Wilhelm Kaisen in Bremen and Max Brauer, the popular 'Regierender Buergermeister' of Hamburg, who spent thirteen years in the United States after 1933 and became an official of the American Federation of Industry, are all men of weight and character.

In terms of personalities alone, Adenauer's support on the Government side is of a much more heterogeneous character. Out of his coalition cabinet of near-nonentities only Professor Ludwig Erhard, his Economics Minister, stands out. The need to balance the widely-diverse elements amongst his supporters has necessitated the reduction to second-rate status by Adenauer of almost every faction leader within his party. The two forceful and uneasy bedfellows on his Left Wing, Kaiser and Arnold, thoroughly out of sympathy with the strong Right-Wing tendency of the Chancellor's present policy, would probably split the party wide open if they graduated to its head. His federalist colleagues from Bavaria are led by a man of great charm and ability, Hans Ehard, with whom the centralist Ruhr industrialists wish to have nothing to do. Nothing will classify Adenauer more finally as a politician rather than a statesman than his threatened inability to legate either a united party or a possible successor.

PRESIDENT HEUSS

Chief catalyst in this group of men, through whose efforts the cause of democracy in Germany will succeed or fail, is the benign personality of the Federal President, Professor Theodor Heuss, who looks more like a delegate to the Assembly which met in Frankfurt in 1848 to found the first Liberal federation of German States, than the first President of a new and resurgent Germany. But his tall, gangling figure, dressed frequently in a quaint nineteenth-century frock coat, his shock of white hair, and his long, tanned face, positively radiating good will and friendliness, has been one of the central personalities of post-war German politics.

Hate, suspicion and intolerance are foreign to his character; but his unworldliness and seemingly total lack of personal ambition stood him in good stead during the difficult days when Western Germany was thrashing out its provisional constitution. Leaders of all parties give due credit to the endless compromises which Professor Heuss worked out and which did as much as anything to make the formation of the present Government possible. Now he has stepped into the position left vacant when von Hindenburg died in 1934. Perhaps a personality so radically different will be more successful in dealing with the problems which confront Germany.

The elevation of Heuss to the apolitical dignity of President leaves his party, the third largest in the land, to be headed by Adenauer's coalition Vice-Chancellor, fifty-four year-old Franz Bluecher, who, with Erhard, is one of the main props of the cabinet. A tall, earnest man who has spent his lifetime in business as head of a large timber concern and director of several private banks, he brings a gift for long-term evaluation to counter-balance what is often criticised as Adenauer's exaggerated concentration on day-to-day political intrigues. A genuine and convinced Manchester-school Liberal, he probably has as much difficulty with the men on the Right Wing of his party as does Adenauer with those on the Left Wing of his.

* * *

It is on the overworked shoulders of these older men and the inexperienced shoulders of their few younger colleagues that the survival of parliamentary institutions in the 'Fourth Reich' depends. At present they have the help and support of the Western Allies, who are still in a position to take good care that extremist elements carry out no lethal attacks on this slender and shaky organ. But the Germans who remember the administrative efficiency and authoritarian discipline of the Hitler régime, and those who pander to the inborn Teutonic hankering for a form of society neatly ordered from top to bottom, are still very much in evidence and slowly working towards a position in which they could again play a decisive rôle.

One of the oddest aspects of the administration of justice in England

THE PREROGATIVE OF MERCY

FREDERICK LAWTON

BARRISTERS with extensive experience of defending in criminal cases can assess with very fair accuracy as soon as they have read their briefs what will happen to their clients: they know which will be convicted and which will be acquitted. But every barrister knows that from time to time cases come before the Courts which defy their skill in forecasting results. Amongst such cases are those in which the evidence is entirely circumstantial, as in the Wallace case; those which raise issues of identity, such as in the two Adolf Beck cases, and those in which the defence of alibi is put forward, such as the Steinie Morison case. In such cases, much will depend upon the way the evidence, particularly the prisoner's if he gives any, comes out at the trial, and upon the personality of the judge.

If the prisoner is intelligent and has a convincing manner, all may be well for him; but if he is stupid and looks shifty, he will probably convict himself. If the judge has a strong and likable personality, like the late Mr. Justice Swift, the jury, unconsciously maybe, will reflect by their verdict such of the judge's views upon the case as have peeped out during the trial.

What happens in cases of this kind when the charge is murder and the verdict is guilty? In most cases the horse sense of the jury produces the right result—but sometimes it does not. The jury were wrong in Oscar Slater's case, and they were wrong in the Wallace case. The Court of Criminal Appeal saved Wallace, and the prerogative of mercy saved Oscar Slater—but he served nineteen years in prison before his conviction was quashed.

How is the prerogative of mercy exercised? A former Home Secretary, Lord Templewood, in *The Shadow of the Gallows —the Case Against Capital Punishment*[1], gives a moving description of the burden of advising upon the exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy. During the two years that he was Home Secretary, he had to consider the cases of forty-seven convicted murderers. He recommended that twenty-four should be reprieved and that four should be sent to Broadmoor. The remainder were executed—and the decision upon each case was his alone.

Were his decisions right? His answer is: 'I cannot honestly say "Yes". All that I can claim is that I took every possible step to reach a right decision. . . . If I made a mistake and refused to recommend a reprieve, there was no remedy. More than once, I had two capital cases to decide at the same time. They were brought to me in the midst of a mass of Cabinet and departmental work. There were dozens of other urgent questions claiming my attention. Yet, I had to say the fatal "yes" or "no" within a few hours, or at most, a few days.'

The exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy on the recommendation of the Home Secretary is one of the oddest aspects of the administration of justice in England. Up to 1837 the King himself, assisted by two or three members of the Privy Council, decided which of the capital felons convicted at the Old Bailey should be reprieved. When Lord Eldon was called upon to help the King with this distasteful task, he was shocked, so he wrote later: 'at the careless manner in which . . . it was conducted. We were called upon to decide on sentences affecting no less than the lives of men, and yet there was nothing laid before us to enable us to judge whether there had or had not been any extenuating circumstances: it was merely a recapitulation of the judge's opinion, and the sentence.'

The scandal of this system continued until 1837 when the chance that a young girl was on the throne made the Government of the day appreciate that other

[1]*Gollancz. 8s. 6d*

arrangements would have to be made. The arrangements which were made gradually crystallised into the present system under which the Home Secretary is the recognised channel for advice upon the prerogative of mercy. But even today, all the Secretaries-of-State are constitutionally competent to act if the Home Secretary is not available. Lord Templewood was called upon to act when he was Secretary-of-State for Air and also when he was Secretary-of-State for India.

The prerogative of mercy must seem oddest to those in need of its exercise. When a dependant to an indictment charging murder hears the foreman of the jury return a verdict of guilty, he probably knows that the judge will have to pronounce sentence in these words: 'The sentence of the Court upon you is that you be taken from this place to a lawful prison, and thence to a place of execution and that you be there hanged by the neck until you be dead; and that your body be afterwards buried within the precincts of the prison in which you shall have been confined before your execution. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul.' Be the prisoner a poisoner or an anguished mother who has killed her child in the depths of despair, sentence in these dreadful terms must be pronounced; and when sentence has been so pronounced, the prisoner is left to guess whether it will be carried out. For a man, the chances of getting a reprieve are six to four *against*, for a woman ten to one *on*.

Lord Templewood's experiences in making recommendations for the exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy made him conscious of the weaknesses in the procedure. 'The Home Secretary's decision,' he writes, 'is made without the calling of witnesses, without seeing the accused, and without any of the publicity that is one of the chief safeguards of British Justice. Inevitably it depends upon the mentality of the individual Home Secretary.' Yet successive Home Secretaries have defended the procedure. In 1907, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, when Home Secretary, said in the House of Commons: 'It would be neither desirable nor possible to lay down hard-and-fast rules as to the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. Numerous considerations—the motive, the degree of premeditation or deliberation, the amount of provocation, the state of mind of the prisoner, his physical condition, his character and antecedents, the recommendation or absence of recommendation from the jury, and many others—have to be taken into account in every case; and the decision depends on a full review of a complex combination of circumstances.' In 1948 Mr. Chuter Ede had to make such a review thirty-eight times, almost a weekly task.

Can anything be done to spare the Home Secretary this burden? As long as a sentence of death is the only sentence for murder, and the law relating to murder remains unchanged, the Home Secretary will have to go on making fatal decisions. The judges cannot help him except by their own personal comments, because the Courts know only murder: the man who kills his mother in order to get her insurance monies is a murderer, as is the survivor of a suicide pact.

If Parliament could be persuaded to classify murder into degrees and to reserve the death sentence for the highest degree only, questions of reprieve would seldom arise, since few convicted murderers intend to kill: most are guilty of wicked recklessness in committing a felonious assault (such as rape or robbery). Yet, because death did result, even though unintended, that was murder.

In the nineteenth century it seemed likely that judge-made law would confine murder to deliberate killing, and would reduce cases of so-called constructive malice aforethought to manslaughter. In his *History of the Criminal Law*, Mr. Justice Stephens wrote: 'The law can hardly be justified in "presupposing" that a thief "carrieth that malicious mind that he will achieve his purpose, though it be with the death of him against whom it is directed" from the fact that he trips a man up in order to rob him and happens to kill him.' In 1857, on the trial of a man named Greenwood, when the jury by their questions showed that they were having difficulty in understanding how the prisoner

could be guilty of murder when clearly he had intended to rape, not to kill, Mr. Justice Wightman told them they could convict of manslaughter if they thought fit. In 1902, Professor Kenny, in the first edition of his famous *Outlines of Criminal Law*, expressed his doubt about the doctrine of constructive malice aforethought in these words: 'The modern tendency is thus towards a limitation of the rule to such felonies as are likely to cause death . . . and homicide resulting from any felony which was intrinsically unlikely to cause death would not be murder at all, but only a case of "involuntary" manslaughter.'

The development of judge-made law towards restricting murder to deliberate killing was stopped in 1919 by the House of Lords in the case of Rex v. Beard. Academic writers on the criminal law continued to attack the doctrine of constructive malice aforethought, and in 1945, in the case of Rex v. Jarmain, their views were put before the Court of Criminal Appeal on behalf of the prisoner and decisively rejected. Since that date any one convicted of killing during the course of robbing or ravishing has had little chance of a reprieve.

Whilst the judges were dallying with ideas about confining murder within smaller limits, attempt after attempt was made in Parliament to classify murder by statute. The Select Committee of 1874 put the case for classification in these words: 'If there is any case in which the law should speak plainly, without sophism or evasion, it is where life is at stake: and it is on this very occasion that the law is most evasive and sophistical.' But every attempt has failed, largely because the judges have joined the opposition. In the House of Lords in 1948, Lord Goddard, the Lord Chief Justice, said that he was against degrees of murder as presenting too much difficulty to judge and jury, and that he preferred discrimination to remain with the Home Secretary who could consult other persons.

Judicial jibbing at such a problem is surprising. At almost every Assize nowadays, juries are asked to try indictments alleging manslaughter arising out of the driving of motor vehicles. Before they can return a verdict, whether of 'guilty' or 'not guilty', or guilty of the lesser offence of dangerous driving, they have to distinguish between no less than three degrees of negligence: namely that which constitutes 'driving without due care and attention', that which constitutes 'dangerous driving' and that which constitutes 'reckless disregard for the lives and limbs of other road users'. If juries can cope with motor manslaughter (and they can and do), they can cope adequately with degrees of murder.

Judges themselves may find the burden of summing-up on the degrees of murder heavy and distasteful—yet for over a hundred years Sessions judges in India (to whom the Temple refers disparagingly as 'Jungle Judges' and 'Bamboo Bills') discharged the heavier burden of trying murder cases without the assistance of a jury and deciding whether the sentence should be death or transportation for life, and this work seems to have been well done. The humanity of the Indian Penal Code, which gave the judge a discretion as to the sentence he could pass, did not open a floodgate of crime—and the Code itself has been incorporated into the new Indian Constitution.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment, presided over by Sir Ernest Gowers, will soon be published. Whatever recommendations are made, the final decisions will really depend upon a free vote of the House of Commons; and that free vote will reflect public opinion as accurately as the parliamentary system will allow. Will that public opinion be the opinion of the time when the vote is taken? Or will it be, as so often in the past, the opinion prevalent some twenty or thirty years ago, the opinion of history?

SCULPTURE IN THE OPEN AIR

ROBERT MELVILLE

A RECENT statement by Henry Moore provides a suitable text for a review of the second international exhibition of sculpture at Battersea Park: 'Sculpture is an art of the open air. Daylight, *sunlight* is necessary to it, and for me its best setting and complement is nature. I would rather have a piece of my sculpture put in a landscape, almost any landscape, than in, or on, the most beautiful building I know.' This is an extreme assertion, but I shall not be the one to diminish its force by introducing qualifications.

Moore is not thinking merely of parks and landscape gardens, but of open fields, downland, cliffs and forest clearings, for he has in mind an ideal and probably unattainable situation in which sculpture can be seen without being exhibited. Today we speak of almost any fine piece of sculpture as a 'museum piece'. Moore is thinking of sculpture that looks trapped and imprisoned in museums. Yet he knows well enough that very little European sculpture of the past five hundred years could be given a ticket of leave. Place a Renaissance *equestrian* in an open field and it would look more of a museum piece than when it stood in its piazza.

The lovely glade in Battersea Park where forty-four miscellaneous works of sculpture are on view is still a museum, but it is evident that few of these things can stand even this mitigated exposure to land and sky.

Behind Moore's statement is the knowledge that a sculpture has to be the realisation of the life within us, absolved from symbolism, and as inattentive of us as the trees, before it can enter into free association with nature. We recognise the miracle when it occurs, by an indefinable quality of *presence*. Strangely and wonderfully enough, a few sculptors of our time, dabbling in a kind of white magic, work upon the human effigy as if they were the instruments of natural selection, preparing male and female figures for an indefinite stay with nature to act as our representatives. Three or four of these effigial intermediaries are to be seen in Battersea Park.

But I must speak of some of the casualties first. There are weak examples by good and even great sculptors, and, more numerous works which seem good of their kind but which become pretentious or self-conscious under the sky's scrutiny. There are also the stupid and extravagant works by bad sculptors, which need not be mentioned.

Rodin's *Orpheus* is an unsatisfactory, quite unresolved composition, with a tormented tree-stump blatantly there to hold up a cumbersome lyre. Away from its niche in the façade of a Lübeck church, Barlach's *Woman in the Wind* seems a hollow demonstration of his knowledge of gothic, a lifeless reconstruction of the Middle Gothic counterplay of realistic head and abstract drapery. In *Mother and Child*, Lipchitz attempts an horrific fusion of bird and woman and commits a cubo-surrealist falsehood. It probably had to await an English audience before the element of farce, introduced by the child on the bird-woman's back, could be thoroughly appreciated: this child bears a remarkable resemblance to Mr. Therm.

Wotruba, applying in his *Human Cathedral* the architectural, slab-on-slab system which has often rewarded him with immensely dignified figures, here conceives a seated figure with a deep lap which is a kind of limestone throne awaiting a presence.

The non-figurative and the 'biomorphic' works fair very badly. Pevsner's *Column of Victory capable of development*, for instance, is so badly mauled by the twitter of birds and the sighing of leaves that it lies utterly and most pathetically vanquished, more forlorn than a discarded toy, in a limbo between art and technology.

The *white* sculpture, abrupt and papery among the lively greens of the park, whether it be marble, stone or reinforced plaster aggregate, disturbs every general view of the glade. The best of them, a sepulchral abstract by Max Bill, called *Rhythm in Space*, assumes fortuitous pseudo-images: frontally, it is a phantom death's head, and from the side a decapitated walking woman.

But, mingling with all the false presences, and forming in the mind's eye a frieze, are bronze and bronzed plaster girls. Sitting, crouching, kneeling and standing, some blithe, some melancholy, they bring with them in varying degrees the stresses and strains of the sustained pose on the model's platform, but few are less than pleasant to look at.

Maillol's *Mediterranean*, unhappily, is one of the exceptions. Too much the female pudding, boneless, plump and inert, she seems magically to have been poured on to her slab from the basin which is still on her head. The legs of the Henning are too bloated, the pose of the Nimptsch rather sloppy. The Vogel has been wrought with care and skill and achieves a kind of cold justice to the beauty of the female form. The Kolbe is superb: he called this crouching nude a Pietà but it has no religious feeling. It is the image of a girl absorbed by the flexing of her muscles, and the sense of physical well-being. But I cannot discover what Kolbe brings to his art beyond sensual awareness and amazing craft. He has stolen the lithe being of a model and remains as inscrutable as a sorcerer. This nude is next to Meunier's nineteenth-century *Docker*, and they make a curiously and disturbingly congruous pair. She is Health and Strength and Meunier's bronze is the Dignity of Labour, and together they cast an ideological shadow over the flower-beds.

The Despiau nude is more than a study from the model; it is a portrait from head to toe of a lovely young woman, made with love and understanding.

The Manzu is the effigy of an adolescent girl, naked except for her ballet shoes, with a perky little face and breasts that are only just beginning to swell. She is leaning back in a rush-seated chair, with her legs outstretched. On wet days one is worried about her health because a puddle of water forms in her chair. It is all a bit macabre, and I don't know what to make of it. Perhaps it is the horribly faithful reproduction of a wooden chair in bronze that makes this piece something of a monstrosity. It is as if the artist had found some diabolical means of petrifying a real person just as she was about to lean against the chair-back. This intrusion of the actual is a flaw in what must surely be a masterpiece, for the bloom of growing life is on the child.

The noblest of these female effigies is Lehmbruck's *Kneeling Girl*. Lehmbruck, who died in 1919 at the age of 38, is Germany's greatest modern sculptor, and his art has the remote tenderness of Rilke's poetry.

The *Kneeling Nude* is sublimely placed in front of a copper beach. She is very beautiful and impossibly tall, for her legs are twice as long as her torso. Her head is inclined in melancholy on a long, stalk-like neck. A robe, taut over one knee, falls away in easy folds. She creates a great silence around her and when one stands in her shadow, even the twittering of the birds seems far off. She affirms the reality of the invisible.

The last time I was in the glade I noticed that a bird had left a long yellow stripe on the head of Kolbe's handsome nude, and she wore it like a ribbon. If it had fallen on the Lehmbruck, it would have seemed like a stigmata.

One does not look for progress in the Arts. One looks for the re-affirmation and the re-enaction of the mystery of presence. Every age has to find new ways of informing the image with life. Lehmbruck neither affirms nor denies the text I have taken from Moore. He was never perhaps quite with us. His bronze figure is an intermediary, but does not belong to that order of intermediaries of which I have already spoken, some members of which I must now call by name. Lehmbruck's figure is an intermediary between ourselves and Heaven, like Rilke's angels. The others are intermediaries between ourselves and nature. They exist within the same mystery but move along a different course.

The adepts of this other way are not related by a shared figurative system, but by the spirit in which they involve themselves in the process of creative transformation.

I would include among them—on the strength of his carving in Battersea Park—a sculptor of whom some hard things have been said, and of whose general position I am uncertain. This sculptor is F. E. McWilliam. He has an obsession with dismemberment that has sometimes looked forced and arbitrary.

The criticism levelled at his Battersea *Head*—that surrealist terrorist tactics rather than inherent sculptural qualities cause its impingement on the mind—is of the kind that usually greets his work, but in this instance seems to me to be unfounded. It has emerged from purely surrealist preoccupations and become a sculptural apotheosis of those 'meetings' and 'encounters' of natural objects or semi-abstract, 'biomorphic' forms which have been a persistent feature of contemporary painting and sculpture, and particularly in evidence in the art of Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and Paul Nash. McWilliam has achieved a synthesis of the abstract and concrete aspects of this peculiarly English preoccupation: it is a meeting of two monolithic stones, carved in brown and green Hornton, on which he has imposed the image of a human face in two parts. The split face, whose two parts stare into one another in dream-like proximity, in the undemonstrative anguish of irremediable division, is in perpetual interplay with the conversation of the stones which are the raised-up image and very embodiment of what Rilke called 'layer upon layer of overthrownness'. By discovering a correspondence between the down-fall of forests and man's divided nature, it conducts us towards the acceptance of our inheritance of the earth.

Sunlight—I have been wanting to say this all along—is necessary to sculpture, but no more so than wind and rain and rising mist. It is on a late evening, with a fine drizzle falling and a mist rising off the pool, that Moore's tall, angular construction, in green bronze, standing for a female figure, comes into its own. In daylight it seems a little dry and cerebral, an experiment for art's sake. It stands near the edge of the pool, and in the evening one suddenly perceives that it is a kind of earth and water goddess, neither woman nor gawky wading bird, but inextricably involved in the nature of both. On the other side of the pool, permanently in place on a grassy mound stand Moore's *Three Figures*. They are solid and monumental; the green bronze is an open cage, a fret of bronze strips controlling spaces. Yet there is no contradiction; they are of the same order of being.

The *Three Figures* are turned towards one another, enacting one of those meetings of stones to which I have already referred. When they were in the Battersea Park Exhibition of 1948, and before they were given a permanent home near the pool, I wrote of them: 'They are bulky figures but with small, lizard-like heads. Their attention has been caught by something in the sky. Their staring is obsessive: it contains the veiled alertness of the reptile and the expectancy of the augur reading omens into the flight of birds.' When I mentioned that their attention had been caught by something in the sky, I also had it in mind that the figures contained Moore's experience of the London air-raids. They are the solid representatives of the women of the shelter drawings, and have heard the sound of planes.

The multiple meaning of this work relates it to Marini's wonderful *Horse and Rider*, a pitted and so to speak travel-stained bronze, an image which embraces many different peoples and beliefs and landscapes. Its tragic overtone is directly connected with the fleeing of Tuscan peasants from the German and Allied bombings, and like Moore's *Three Figures*, has the invaluable gift of exteriorizing communal experience. Marini never transforms the effigy beyond the borders of the human, but refers it to many layers of human history. The profound relatedness of horse and rider in the bronze at Battersea draws together a vast and half lost history of migrations and military expeditions, and this image, perhaps unique in our time, combines the commemorative, the symbolic and the realistic.

There remains the difficulty of talking about Giacometti. His bronze is the smallest in the exhibition, a last-minute substitute for a larger work in plaster which began to dissolve in the rain. It looks minute on the plinth prepared for the other work, yet it has perhaps greater intensity of presence than any other work on view. It can very easily be missed because no other sculptor has ever whittled away the effigy to such a degree. I first caught sight of his *Three Men Walking* in pouring rain. I was going past it and suddenly caught out of the corner of my eye what I thought was an activity in the bushes. The rain had turned the bronze to shining blackness and the little figures were so adapted to their unexpected environment that they were the quintessence of all the glimmering, soaked, black twigs around them. It was a new experience to see human effigies acting in a manner that recalled those queer little insects which stick out from twigs as if they were part of the plant itself. But the Giacometti figures were not keeping still. They were incredibly animated.

It is not that they are walking quickly. They are walking very deliberately away from and past one another, without recognition, intent upon the task which the sculptor seems to have given them of stirring and animating all the air about them. These almost anti-sculptural creatures affirm that man is being and not thing, spirit and not substance, and they seem to me to carry with them into the world of twigs and leaves that they have chosen to inhabit until mid-September all the elasticity of the human soul.

The London County Council's Exhibition, which is reviewed above by Robert Melville, can be treated also as an historical survey of European sculpture during the past seventy years.

1. Realism: Meunier's *Docker* of 1884.

Meunier, who was a workman's son, studied from life in the Belgian coalmines, and was rewarded by being called almost always 'the Millet of Sculpture'.

2. Impressionism: Rodin's *Orpheus* of 1892.

Maillol's *Mediterranean*, 1901. The new classicism. Abandoning the 'broken touches' and the inspired print of the sculptor's fingers on the bronze, Maillol and Bourdelle presented plain solid forms of tremendous power. In Lehmbruck and Minne these forms become slender and attenuated to a moving degree.

3. The disrupting effects of the Cubist experiment and the mortal blows dealt to representational art were reflected, first of all, in Cubist sculpture. (Zadkine and Lamens are not represented at Battersea.) Then come the problems of the twentieth century common to all modern sculptures in extreme sensitiveness to material which may be steel plates, forged iron or coloured stone.

McWilliams' *Head in Green and Brown*. Surrealism presents 'the correspondence between the downfall of forests and man's divided nature'.

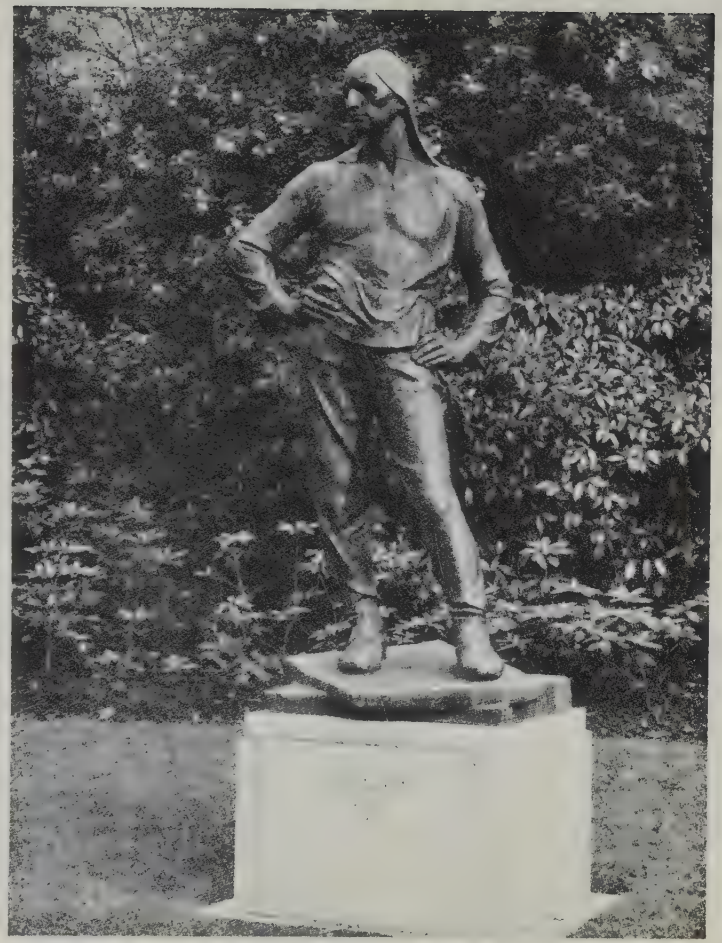
Hepworth's *Biolith*. The correspondence between the human form and the rock, the fallen tree, the slow life of plants, the seacave, has fascinated many modern sculptors.

In Butler's *Torso* space and solid are of equal importance as materials.

4. Epstein's *Lazarus*

The great romantic. Cubism and research among primitive and Egyptian motives have not modified the intense romanticism of Epstein's art. His *Lazarus* is extremely well placed at Battersea against the pitch dark background of evergreens.

2



Meunier

Docker 1884

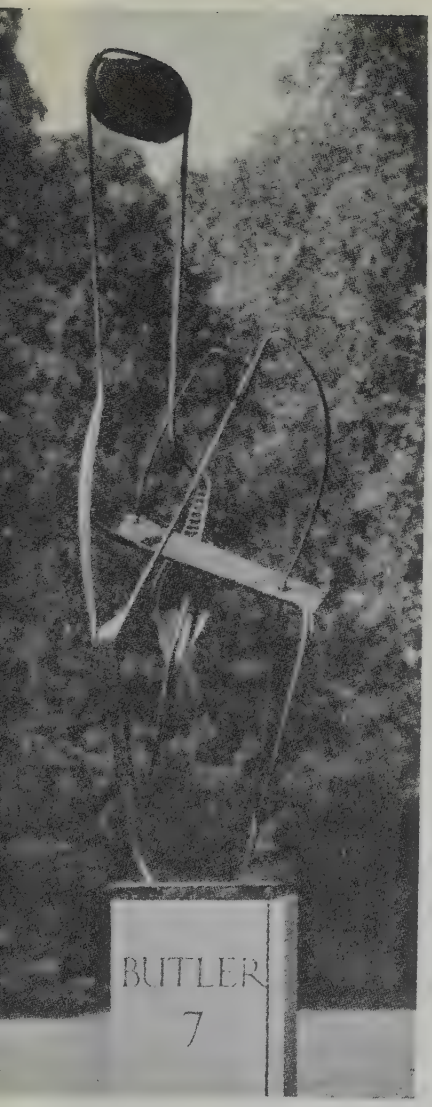
Rodin

Orpheus 1892

Maillol *Mediterranean 1901*

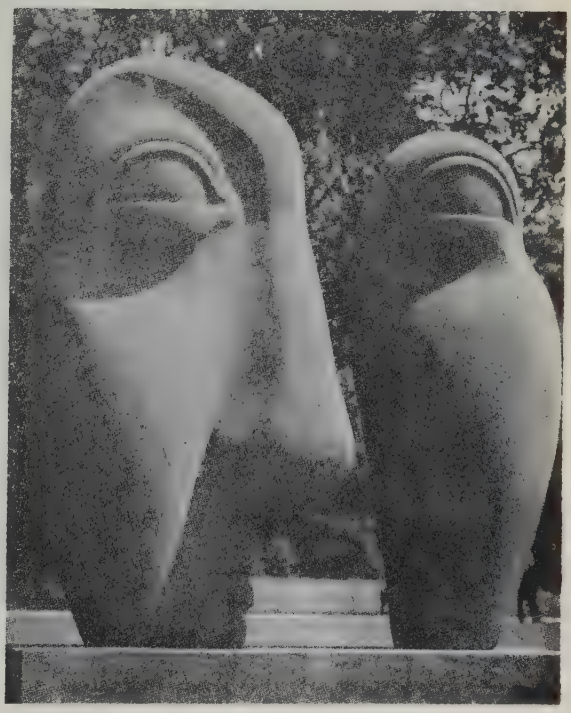
Minne *Relic Bearer*

Lehmbruck *Kneeling Girl*



Torso

Hepworth *Biolith*



McWilliam *Head in Green and Brown*

Epstein *Lazarus*

We live in a disordered society. What is particularly striking is the commonness of a feeling that life is scarcely tolerable.

THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE

GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR

'LIFE is not a vessel to be drained, but a cup to be filled.' This Chinese proverb, quoted at the start of *English Life and Leisure*, provides the clue to the writers' thesis[1]. Modern productivity has given most men the opportunity to fill their leisure more richly than before. Instead, they fill it with distractions, especially sensual distractions. Great industries have risen to supply drink, tobacco, films and the opportunity for gambling. If the provision of casual sexual intercourse has not become another industry, it is only because sexual taboos have weakened to the point where people freely make their own mutual sexual arrangements; and even so, according to the writers, London prostitutes satisfy a quarter of a million men weekly.

Remembering Seebohm Rowntree's earlier studies, notably *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, no one will be surprised to find that *English Life and Leisure* is not so much a research report as a tract for the times. As the chapter headings immediately show (they include 'Drink', 'Gambling', 'Smoking', 'Sexual Promiscuity' and 'How Honest is Britain?' but exclude, for instance, Sport), the study is more concerned to pinpoint certain 'social evils' than to make a comparative or quantitative survey. It does not claim to be representative in any statistical way and it has been gathered wholly from urban sources. A survey of country life and leisure would certainly alter the perspective, while most small towns would doubtless show an appreciably different pattern from that of High Wycombe, now little more than a ribbon development on the road to Oxford, which the writers take as their case-study example.

Nevertheless, such qualifications only argue the need for more extended research: they do not abolish the existence of the phenomena observed. But while it is easy enough to note the existence of these facts, we cannot hope to alter them unless we can produce a sound hypothesis about their causation. Why do people spend their leisure and their money in these ways?

SENSUAL DISTRACTIONS

The psychologists have made it clear that men do not act at random: every action is governed by certain stresses and needs. But the anthropologists have shown how largely their responses are restricted to patterns of behaviour which are customary in their society. If, then, Britons are smoking more, wenching more and gambling more, it must be because they experience a feeling of need which these activities do something to assuage. It does not need much perspicacity to guess that they are using these sensual distractions to numb the ache of emotional or spiritual emptiness. That men turn to drink to drown grief is a commonplace, which several of the 220 case-studies in this book confirm. How easily attention can be switched from one anodyne to another is illustrated by the man who said he was now more interested in 'chasers' than in chasing. These case-studies also demonstrate clearly enough how devoid of solid emotional, aesthetic and spiritual satisfactions are the lives of the majority of the populace.

If this analysis is correct, these 'evils' will not be eliminated merely by offering innocuous pastimes as substitutes, but only by radical changes in the character of society calculated to satisfy fundamental emotional and spiritual needs. In particular, attention must be directed to those forces which mould personality and too often create individuals incapable of sustaining satisfactory human relationships. The problem of a healthy leisure is the problem of a healthy society.

[1] *English Life and Leisure*, by B. Seebohm Rowntree and G. R. Lavers, Longmans, Green 15s.

GAMBLING

What is particularly striking about the contemporary *malaise* is the commonness of a feeling that life is scarcely tolerable. It is not that any striking grief or privation has been endured, but a diffuse sense that life ought to have more to offer. It is this feeling, I believe, that explains the frequency of gambling. Gambling has been explained as an attempt to bring a little excitement into a dull life. It is far more than this: often it represents a chance of escape from an existence which is felt to be intolerable—the only chance. For the ordinary man, no amount of effort holds out much hope of rising from the rut; the most that can be hoped for is a modest improvement of standards. And it is not modest improvements but a miraculous transformation for which he is looking. But to understand gambling, we must also recognise a second factor: it is a mode of reaction to a world which seems both incomprehensible and uncontrollable. The ordinary man today feels convinced that nothing he can do will make an appreciable difference; he is helpless in the tug of obscure economic, social and political forces, which may in a moment annul the patient effort of a lifetime or lift one without effort to undreamed-of privilege. In a completely arbitrary and irrational world, why exert oneself? The only sensible course is to back as many numbers as possible on the cosmic roulette wheel.

J. A. Hobson argued that gambling was ethically undesirable because it represented a rejection of reason, and reason was man's highest achievement. But gambling in its modern form is just the reverse of irrational: not only is it the most sensible response to any situation where reason has proved inadequate (we all spin a penny when we're stuck), but modern gambling is often accompanied by remarkable intellectual effort. The backer of racehorses does not stick in a pin; he minutely studies the form and bases his bet upon reason as far as he can. The devotees of football pools often attain a degree of proficiency in that branch of mathematics known as Permutations and Combinations which would have delighted their ushers. The fact is, the modern gambler is not rejecting reason—he is clinging to it. He would be very happy to remove the element of uncertainty altogether, if it were possible consistently with retaining the chance of escape into a richer life which he seeks.

These 'social evils', then, are not so much a cause for criticism as a sign of grace. They represent an attempt to adapt to a situation instead of escaping from it into suicide, neurosis or insanity.

IS SENSUALITY INCREASING?

If it is true (as Rowntree and Lavers hold) that sensuality and selfishness are on the increase, various causes may be suspected. For instance, changes in society may be making the satisfaction of psychological needs more difficult—thus economic forces are continually making the age of marriage higher, creating problems of sexual satisfaction. One of the most important of these factors may be the growth of urbanism—it is no accident that almost all the case-studies offered are from urban surroundings.

Such factors invite further research, but probably a more important factor is a general change in standards of morality. This change invites a brief analysis. In the past, most societies, including our own, have relied for the maintenance of moral standards upon the existence of a rigid code, backed by human and supernatural sanctions. The code simply declared what should *not* be done (much more rarely, what *should* be done) but did not attempt to give reasons for the prohibitions. Today, however, we have a whole population educated, if dimly, in the idea that to perform an action for which no valid reason can be adduced is ridiculous. Very little attempt has been made to teach this population the sound reasons which have given birth to most moral rules. Everyone can understand the objections to murder, and consequently most people condemn murder. Few people can understand, without instruction, the objections to sexual promiscuity, while its immediate satisfactions are very obvious; hence many do not condemn it. We are trying to build a society based on reason with a morality based on tradition.

The change-over from dogma to reason as the basis for action has been greatly accelerated by the decline in the authority of the Church. The Church having rashly supported several untenable propositions (usually as a result of defective argument from unimpeachable premises), many have concluded that all its dogmas were equally unreliable and have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. The counterpart of this is an excessive faith in the validity of scientific explanation: partial explanations are taken to be complete ones. Physiological explanations of sex, for instance, are accepted as the whole story in cheerful unawareness of the emotional implications. The answer to this, of course, is not to discard science, but to press on with it. The newer branches of social science are all busy demonstrating the inadequacy of earlier, mechanical analyses of behaviour and no doubt will themselves be subject to subtler criticism in due course. The nearer science approaches to the description of reality—that is, to truth—the nearer it must come to moral law.

At present it is widely felt that for many purposes science is a better technique than religion for dealing with an unpleasant and unpredictable world. Within its limits, it is far more reliable. This is an important factor in the rejection of religious belief. But if science should undo itself—if people should come to feel that science were creating insecurity and frustration on such a scale as to outweigh its benefits—there might be a reaction towards supernatural techniques of control. There are signs of such a reaction in the popularity of astrology and fortune-telling.

DISORDERED SOCIETY

But it would, I think, be illusory to imagine that all we have to do is to draw up an easily comprehensible rationale for the moral code and teach it in the schools and adult education courses. By a common misunderstanding of the meaning of the term democracy, we tend to ignore the very real differences between people of different age-groups, different temperaments, different levels of intelligence. These make it necessary to interpret the code in varying terms according to the needs of the listener. At the same time, it has been clearly established that people derive their patterns of behaviour principally from their own immediate group. Modern technology has done much to break up the closely-knit groups which are characteristic of an ordered society, and modern communications have facilitated the creation of a mass culture; one feature of this is highly-generalised behaviour standards which make no allowance for variation in conditions. Little thought is needed to see that, for instance, wifely behaviour which would be admirable in Mayfair might be disastrous in the Hebrides.

In short, we live in a disordered society, and social health cannot be restored until order is restored. More, this very lack of order contributes to the individual's sense of insecurity and futility and invites the crude re-imposition of some kind of order by dictatorial means.

There are many other factors in the situation: one more must be briefly mentioned. This is the extent to which we have become dependent upon money. The standard of life of pre-industrial man depended largely upon his own efforts (and, of course, on other factors) so that the kind of life he led was, to a considerable extent, under his own control. A social group could decide what proportion of its time it would give to work, and what to leisure. And, as the farmer does today, the individual performed a varied range of tasks and had some choice as to what he would do on a particular day. But nowadays the individual has little choice but to accept a job at a stated rate and for stated hours, or not to work at all. In the majority of cases, his income has little relation to the effort or conscientiousness he devotes to the task, provided he is not actually so unsatisfactory as to be dismissed altogether. And, to a large extent, his choice of leisure activity is restricted to those for which facilities can be bought with the money he has earned. In short, though it is true that there is a sense in which money widens the range of choice, there is another in which a system based on money narrows the range of choice in important ways.

PERCEPTION NEEDS

In addition to these two salient reasons why sensuality may be on the increase—

the changes in the social environment and the rejection of an *ex cathedra* morality—there is a third possibility which receives less attention. Men may be attempting to satisfy their needs in new ways *because their perception of these needs is itself changing.*

People are consciously and explicitly aware of their physical appetites; they are perhaps less explicitly aware of their emotional, aesthetic and spiritual needs than at any time in modern history. This may be partly because science has provided us with a much fuller vocabulary for describing the first than the second, and has hardly begun to provide one for the others. However, the fault is not science's alone: too little is done to teach such vocabulary as exists, a failure which is especially noticeable in the field of aesthetics. Consequently, people are but vaguely aware of these needs; they 'know they want something, but they don't know what they want.'

This is but the lesser part of the problem, however. For it is also true that modern communications, especially the cinema, have made people vividly aware of the existence of a wide range of possible endeavour and experience. As a result, tasks which would have seemed secure and seemly in 1750 today seem cramped and stultifying. But while communications have made them aware of the possibilities, technology and social policy have not yet found the way to provide these opportunities for more than a minority of the population. This situation, which is also the key to the growth of Communism in China and nationalism in India and elsewhere, represents a major crisis in the story of civilisation.

CHANGING THE PATTERN

If this analysis is correct, a more fruitful leisure can only come as a result of a more fruitful existence generally, an existence which provides the fullest opportunity for development of every potentiality in each individual's personality. Such an existence calls for radical changes in the pattern of society, but before we can hope to initiate change, there must be a heightened awareness of the nature of needs. Such an awareness is not brought about primarily by intellectual methods but by experience. The discipline which teaches us how to heighten our sensibility is that of art. As Herbert Read has brilliantly demonstarted, education takes place *through* art. It is difficult to imagine a society with a satisfying leisure and a low state of artistic awareness.

Perhaps the picture is not as black as Rowntree and Lavers imagine. Against their artless drunkards and gamblers we can at least set the portents of the popularity of symphony concert and ballet, the long queues for the Tate.

This is not to say that there are not vast problems to be tackled. Like all problem-identifying researches, Rowntree and Lavers have uncovered more problems than they have solved. None is more important than the problem of awareness of needs. Without such awareness, there can be no growth of personality. Without growth of personality, we cannot hope to substitute for vulgar sensuality the sensibility upon which must be founded the century of the uncommon man.

ON A TITLE AND PREFACE

You call your verses Fugitive*:*
You 'hope that some of them may live.'
My friend, however hard they run
They shall be caught, and justice done.

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

2

THE GREEN JACKET—II

MARIO SOLDATI

The Green Jacket *is one of three stories published under the title* A Cena Col Commendatore. *The Commendatore is an impresario. For a production of* Otello *in 1946 he engaged the brilliant young conductor, Maestro W. At the first rehearsal W. suddenly refused to carry on. In explanation, W. tells the story of his escape to the Allies in 1944. In a remote monastery, he met Romualdi, now a drummer in the orchestra, but then resplendent in a green jacket and claiming to be a famous conductor. To amuse himself, W. plays up to Romualdi and poses as a ragioniere (book-keeper). W. gets a room for them both in the house of Dolores, a widow. One night Dolores asks him to come to her room.*

I was determined, once I had overcome the immediate temptation, not to stir from my bed.

' "Come soon, I shall be waiting. Close the curtain and then come quickly. If you take your shoes off, he won't hear anything."

' "All right," I said, and went back to my room. I slipped into bed and tried to go to sleep, but I had forgotten the picture. As I lay on my back in what I imagined at first to be the complete darkness of the room, trying to go to sleep, I began to make out, in the feeble glow from the paraffin lamp beside Romualdi's bed, the tulle veil above my head with its corrugated effect of the vertical folds; and out of the concealing gloom I gradually had a foreshortened view of a vague phosphorescent form which little by little assumed the shape of the nude body of Dolores. After a little while, against the pallor of the skin I could distinguish a darker patch between the belly and the thighs. I closed my eyes not to see, but I saw just the same. I turned over on one side. I felt the presence of the picture and the real Dolores waiting for me not far away. I twisted on to my back again, buried my head beneath the pillow, and with every moment that passed I became more awake. I felt as if I were in the grip of pincers, forcing me to turn over, open my eyes wide and stare into the blackness until I saw that nude, inviting form. It was torture. In my imagination, aided by that nebulous fantastic portrait—a naked body in the night—Dolores seemed more beautiful and desirable than when I had felt her in my arms a few minutes before. I think I must have almost lost control of my movements, and have been very restless in bed, because all at once, I heard the voice of Romualdi above the subdued commotion I was causing with my sighs, twisting about and the rustling of the sheets. In the silence of the night sounded a clear firm voice; not like that of someone who had just been disturbed from sleep but rather like someone who had long lain awake in tranquil meditation:

' "Ragioniere," he said, "ragioniere, I hear that you are not asleep yet. I can't sleep either. Come over here."

'I was so surprised that I did not reply, but wrapped myself in a blanket and crossed the room. Romualdi said:

' "Draw the curtain now."

'More surprised than ever, I obeyed.

' "Now draw up that chair." And he indicated the chair on which hung the green jacket.

' "I've made you get up because if we talk too loud we might be heard *in there.* And I didn't come over to you because we would be too near to *that* room." He spoke with a strange emphasis and there was a faint ambiguous smile on his face. He was certainly alluding to Dolores but I didn't quite know in what sense.

' "Look, ragioniere," he went on, after a brief pause, lowering his voice to the merest whisper, "I'm on the brink of old age."

I protested. But what was he saying? How old was he? Fifty? Impossible.

' "It's not that," he resumed, "but when you get to my age—you are younger than me—you are probably ten years younger—or am I wrong?"

'I said that he was not wrong.

' "Well, when you get to my age, you suddenly regret not taking all that life has offered."

' I had no idea what he was driving at.

' "In other words, this morning you

believed, or you wanted to make me believe, that the lady in *there* had taken a fancy to me, but as I was saying, it is quite clear that you are the favourite one."

' "Come, come, ragioniere, I see that you are hesitating. Think nothing of it; remember that old age comes all of a sudden. How many years to go? Ten? Fifteen years? What are they? And the opportunities, the great opportunities are so few. Do you know what the Romans say? —*Ogni lasciata è persa*—Opportunity knocks but once. Ah, well, never mind, ragioniere, and drawing his right arm from beneath the sheets (he was wearing a pair of dark brown pyjamas, with dark green stripes, I can see them now), he tapped me cordially on the knee.

'Yes, I can see him now as he was that night. Poor, dear Romualdi, snuggled down in his newly-made bed as if he were in an envelope, his head exactly in the centre of the pillow, his deep-set round lustreless eyes, dark blue, almost violet, contrasting with his pink fresh cheeks. He looked steadily at me and beneath his neat American-style moustache played an uncertain smile—a shy smile, which was afraid to be a smile. As I looked at him, I was seized then (and this happens every time I think of it) by an uncontrollable spasm of anguish. Romualdi did not know who I was, and was completely unaware that I was superior to him. To him, I was a younger person than he, a layman, and therefore inferior to him, a little bank clerk with scanty means and modest ambitions, a person, therefore, who even in practical life was perhaps inferior, equal, or only very little superior to him. I could not suspect him of ulterior motives. He was speaking from the heart. However could it be, I asked myself then, that a man who appears to you at a certain moment as a friend or even a father, as equal or even superior to you, can also seem, all the infinite number of moments which follow that one given moment, ridiculous, vain and insignificant? The ridiculous embrace with which you have supported him—you seemed to have in your hands a puppet, not a man—is transformed into a handclasp between man and man, mutual recognitions between equals on the journey of life, a relationship to be cultivated—the finest, noblest relationship—friendship. And why, I asked myself anxiously, gazing at that obese body, buried in the bed, those round little eyes which stared at me almost without a vestige of expression, those fleshy lips from which came such clear understanding and human words, why are you me at this moment and then the moment afterwards you are so far and different from me that it almost seems that you are non-existent, but only a figment of my imagination? Why are we condemned to this absurd separation, you there and I here? What is the reason that you are one man and I another man? What cruel disposition forces us almost continually to lie, and to lie to each other; in other words, to be different and separated one from the other? If it is only your insignificance which distinguishes you from me, then I don't know what to do with my greatness; it's a heavy cloak that I willingly throw from my shoulders, to follow you unencumbered amid the myriads of men, small men like you and me, wisps of straw from a great stack in the sunshine, blades of grass which shudder in the breezes over the meadow.

Picolo viver tra tuti i picoli
e morir de passion

says the poet. But it is not your insignificance, because for a moment you are no longer insignificant. You are great, great like me, greater than me. No one is perpetually insignificant. Everyone has his moment of greatness. But this greatness is illusive and fleeting. It is impossible to trace its identity; its goings and comings are inscrutable. It is like a mysterious grace which rains on no one and on everyone; one never knows when and to what degree.

'And yet, there is an instinct in us which urges us to defy this immutable law of changeability. It is the instinct which is the basis of marriage, friendship, family and society, and at that moment, it was the same instinct which induced me to strike up the friendship with Romualdi. I gave him my hand, thanking him for his affectionate advice, and slowly returned to my half of the room. I drew the heavy velvet curtain across, and after a little more than a quarter of an hour, just enough for him to go to sleep, or at least for him to think that I considered it enough for him to go to sleep, I slipped into the bathroom,

and from the bathroom to Dolores's bedroom. She was awake and waiting for me, agitated at the delay. As soon as I entered, she lit between the sheets a pocket torch which illuminated transparently her dark curly hair, her smiling red lips and her golden brown generous bosom (her skin was either bronzed by the sun or was perhaps naturally olive), her bare arms with the tinkling bracelets like those of a bayadère pictured in an oleograph, and her red, pointed nails already caressing me. Then . . . *Ah! que c'est beau l'amour imité.*

'I slept with that firm, perfect, dreamless, timeless sleep which only satisfied senses can give. I couldn't say how long I slept, perhaps a minute perhaps an hour, when I was rudely awakened by loud cries from Dolores, and while I was vaguely remembering that I had gone to sleep in her bed, I saw her dishevelled in her dressing-gown, a torch in her hand crying:

' "Caterina, yes I'm coming," towards a door on which Caterina was hammering, and shouting:

' "Quick, quick, Signora for the love of heaven."

'Then I heard the crump of a bomb, not really near enough to justify such terror, and a distant noise of aeroplanes and machine-gun fire; then women's cries from the nearby houses and from all directions the noise of hurrying feet. I picked up my clothes in a heap and rushed out through the bathroom, whispering hurriedly to Dolores that we would meet at the entrance.

'Romualdi had put on his raincoat over his pyjamas, a beret, slippers, and was waiting for me, the picture of calm.

'A little torch operated by a dynamo was in his hand, which, he explained to me afterwards, he always kept for such occasions. I dressed as best I could, and we went out into the garden. Meanwhile, more bombs could be heard nearer. The roar of aeroplanes and machine-gun fire increased in intensity. At that moment, Dolores and Caterina had come out into the garden, both screaming, and wanted to escape to the mountain, where they said there were caves that were the only safe shelter. The night was pitch black and cloudy, and yet on the road in front of the villa we could make out black fleeting shadows all going in the same direction, people from the village, women screaming in desperation, calling on the Virgin, Jesus, and all the saints.

' "They're going to the caves, let's go too, quickly, quickly," shouted the servant, rushing out of the gate. But Romualdi

took Dolores by the arm and held her back.

' "No, Signora, don't go, there's no need,' he explained quickly with the utmost confidence. "There's no danger here. Look over there." He pointed behind us at the redness in the sky.

' "There you see, they're bombing over there. It's Vinchiaturo station where there's a German dump. It seems near because there's only that hill in between and the aeroplanes going to and fro have to pass over here. But there's no danger. Let's stay here. Don't worry. Of course, naturally the villagers are terrified because it's the first time that they've heard the bombs so near, but if you go up to the caves dressed like that you'll run the risk of catching pneumonia or even worse."

'And, shining the torch in front of him, he gently led her back into the house and made her put on a fur coat. Then we all trooped out again into the garden to watch the sky which became redder and redder. We no longer heard any bombs; the throb of aeroplane engines trailed away into the distance, and there were only isolated spurts of machine-gun fire. As you well know, I'm not brave; moreover, I'd never been in a heavy bombardment. So the little experience, I admit, had shaken me somewhat and I had kept a firm grip on my self-control, perhaps only out of vanity in front of Dolores, in order not to spoil the good impression which, rightly or wrongly, I believed I had made a few minutes before. But anyway, one thing was certain, for the second time that night, Romualdi had proved that he was a man and not a puppet. If anybody was the puppet, it was I. I was ashamed of myself, of my stupid pride, of my ready assumption of the fact that I was superior. At the same time, I was glad that I had been wrong about Romualdi, glad as usual to be able to change my opinion and rapidly believe the opposite of what I had believed a moment before. On similar occasions I lose all sense of balance and go immediately to the opposite extreme. While the noise of the aeroplanes faded into the distance, I reflected on what had happened before my eyes in that place a few moments before. I saw Romualdi again helping Dolores to put on the fur coat. I saw him pouring out for her a glass of herb wine, carrying out into the garden a little wicker divan and helping her to sit down, and it was as if I were paralysed with admiration at the simple human actions, which he had carried out so naturally, and at the thought which had prompted them. They were all his ideas—the fur coat, the herb wine, the wicker seat. I, who a short time before had had Dolores in my arms, had stood there, silent, embarrassed, entirely occupied in concealing my fear of the bombs, and without the slightest thought which did not refer to myself. I thought that Romualdi was kind, good, and generous. He harboured no resentment for Dolores, who had preferred me to him. He was not even envious of me. Calm and paternal as he had been with me, he now attended to her.

'It was in this state of mind, a topsy-turvy state of man, that the following afternoon after lunch when Dolores opened the piano, I prepared to help Romualdi to get the choral pieces down in writing. It wasn't really a piano but an old out-of-tune pianola which her husband had left her, together with the rest of the furniture. She had brought it with her from Rome because she thought that sometimes the radio is not sufficient to beguile the hours of solitude. And it had been a good idea, for ever since the Germans had blown up the Popoli power-house, the current was only on for two hours out of twenty-four. So I sat down at the pianola, and pleased to be able to render some service to Romualdi, whom I now respected really as much as I had pretended to before, I was just about to play one of Mendelssohn's songs when I stopped short, I think with my hands ready to strike the first chord, in the air, undecided how to begin. What should I do? Begin to play as well as I normally did? Should I unmask myself and tell Romualdi who I was and what I had done and what I had hoped to do?

'I had come to feel this was a sort of duty. Romualdi deserved the utmost sincerity, but it was an admission which I found very hard to make, because I should have to confess that I had lied to him up to then, and made fun of him. I hesitated, and I racked my brains to see if it were possible by some flash of ingenuity to represent all my lies and my pretence at musical ignorance as a series of precautions

I took since leaving Florence. Meanwhile, Romualdi drew near to me, placed a hand on my shoulder, and in a thin, tremulous falsetto began

Natal! Natal!
Oggi Cristo è nato,
Il Signore a noi fu dato,
Re, pastori, d'Israel . . .

I had instinctively begun to accompany him with simple chords of thirds and fifths. He stopped to thump me enthusiastically on the shoulder.

' "Very good, very good, ragioniere," and, turning to Dolores who was listening while she knitted on the settee, "and think of it, he's only an amateur, he's never studied. It's a perfect accompaniment, tonic, dominant, tonic."

'I writhed inwardly and thought. Now I could stand up and tell him in Dolores's presence—No, I'm not an amateur, I studied for eighteen years at the Milan Conservatory. I have diplomas for piano, violin, 'cello, composing, conducting. I have studied singing, harmony, counterpoint. I am acquainted with every instrument. I've conducted concerts in Milan, at Zürich, at Budapest—at that time I had not conducted elsewhere. I, one of the leading Italian orchestral conductors, perhaps one of the best in the world? Tell me, could I have got up from the piano and said all that?

'At all events, I didn't even have time to make my mind up whether I should or not because Romualdi had started again:

Natal! Natal!
Oggi Cristo è nato,
Il Signore a noi fu dato . . .

' "You see, Signora, this is a composition of mine," he continued by way of explanation, "one that I wrote many years ago, and now I'm trying to recall it. I want to teach it to the girls' choir for the monastery Christmas concert. But I can remember only the beginning. I've racked my brains since last night, but I can't remember how it goes on.'

' "A composition by you, but how lovely!" said the widow, putting down her knitting, getting up from her seat and prettily tidying her hair with one hand. She approached the piano with the affected excitement of an intellectual hostess preparing to listen to her concert artist guest.

'At that moment, I felt an impulse to shout:

' "But stop, this is 'Werther' by Massenet."

'But tell me, could you have done it? Perhaps you'll say I should have. I don't know. I don't know even now. Was that impulse good or bad? Was it cowardice on my part? A fear of antagonising a companion—a companion with whom I had to live, with whom I would have to live perhaps for some days or weeks; and by my silence did I make myself an accomplice of his lie or was it the discreet and justifiable hypocrisy of a great man who, finding himself in the same boat with the underdog, carries on a pretence so as not to offend him uselessly? What restrained me? Was it false pity or human tolerance for someone who, although vain, silly, ridiculous and untruthful, had since shown human qualities, and should I not have recognised even more fully those qualities; should not I have considered him as a man and a friend and speak to him as such, since he had shown himself to be a man and a friend?

'Yes, perhaps that was what I should have done. You see, I am realising it only now for the first time, while I am telling you all this. That was why I felt guilty towards him, why I stopped the rehearsal of *Otello* this morning and why I cannot fulfil my contract.

'Yes, in that moment, it was absurd. I could not in the presence of Dolores shout out:

' "You're a fake. This is Massenet's music and I am so and so."

'No, I couldn't. I would have been rude, uncouth and unpleasant, to no purpose. But why didn't it ever occur to me that I only had one duty—to tell him the whole truth slowly, discreetly, little by little? Well, the fact is that this would have been long, involved, complicated and tiresome. That is why it did not occur to me. That is why I can no longer look at Romualdi without feeling ashamed. How often this sort of thing happens in life! When we are hesitating between two contrary decisions which seem to be the only ones, and both equally unpleasant, we accuse fate for

causing us embarrassment and torment, and we see only that the two decisions are unpleasant. We don't realise that we're too lazy to think of, and follow, a third—the only right one. Could I have reasonably complained that this was too difficult? Had I not right at the beginning committed a small and yet an enormous crime?

'When I first heard the friars talking about the famous musician Romualdi, and when I saw that plump little man with his comic green jacket and his bouncing step coming to meet me in the refectory, why had I concentrated on looking at the jacket and not the man? And when, after my sarcastic remarks about his jacket, I had seen the cigarette trembling on his lips, should not that reaction have warned me that Romualdi was a man too? Of course, my duty had now become difficult. Recklessly, out of curiosity, influenced by a sort of vicious habit, I had descended the uncertain way of the practical joke, to find my way back again was complicated and difficult; the path was steep and the landmarks vague. I went on pulling his leg, lying, deceiving, and succeeded in stifling the prompting of remorse.

'Our nature is so perverse that the difficulties presented by this way did not frighten me. On the contrary, they attracted me. I overcame them with a frenzied, almost gay, flight of fancy. To start with, it was a question of rewriting, little by little, Massenet's *Natale*, just as Massenet had written it, but making Romualdi think that I thought that he had written it, and that he was remembering it, bar by bar, note by note. I was very clever, I assure you. If I knew, for example, that the next phrase, the one which he couldn't remember, went:

A, B, A, C natural, B, A, B, G

as if experimenting with the keys, I played a similar phrase which remotely ressembled it:

A, B, A, C, B, C, B, A

Then he, his memory jogged, corrected it to this:

A, B, A, D, B, A, B, G

Then I, without seeming to, got an even closer approximation to the original phrase:

A, B, A, C sharp, B, A, B, G

Then just another note, another little push:

A, B, A, C natural, B, A, B, G

And then I heard behind me a cry of jubilation:

'"That's it, that's it. Very good, ragioniere."

'It was a cruel game, like a cat playing with a mouse. I'm ashamed of it even while I'm telling you. I would like to be able to beg his pardon, if he could understand me and if he could forgive me. But it's such a stupid story, don't you think?'

W., his eyes full of tears, was getting excited; at the same time he had a lump in his throat, and I found it rather difficult to follow him.

We had ordered some mineral water. He drank two glasses, one after the other. The room was stuffy, perhaps because I had smoked too much while I was listening. We opened the window. We went out on to the balcony and breathed in for a few moments in silence the cool, damp air of the Pincio, peering into the deep, restful blackness. Paola was sleeping peacefully. We covered her with her fur coat. W., calmer, but perhaps sadder, went back to sit in the armchair, just as the defendant in a long trial takes his place in the dock.

He went on:

'How can one possibly beg forgiveness for a sin like mine? I had indulged in a long, subtle, cruel and stupid game of persecution. I could crave forgiveness for any other sin, or crime, but not for what I had done. Don't you agree?

'"He played with me"—he would say—"he played with me just as he liked for three long months, day after day, night after night, moment after moment, and now he has the presumption to ask my forgiveness. He can go to the Devil!" It's only human, isn't it? If I dared to ask Romualdi's forgiveness . . . but even the words—ask forgiveness—sound ridiculous in this case, don't they?

'That afternoon the widow sent Caterina to the tobacconist's shop to buy paper, pencils, a ruler, Indian ink and pen-nibs. I drew staves on four sheets of paper, inventing a story that at school I was top in penmanship and so my father had insisted on my studying to be an accountant, in

which job neatness and precision was essential to keep double-entry ledgers. And then slowly, creating for him, for the widow, almost for myself, the perfect illusion that I was writing to Romualdi's dictation (while in actual fact it was I who was hinting to Romualdi every note which he dictated to me), slowly I reproduced exactly the little chorus from Werther. The most difficult part of the pretence was suggesting the words. I remembered them but there seemed no way of getting Romualdi to recall them. The notes . . . there are only seven, affirm those who are not musicians, so it was possible that a note written by Maestro Romualdi so many years before could occur to Ragioniere Premoli, at least it seemed possible to Romualdi who was not a musician. But what about the words?

'I followed the same system, suggesting various readings which gradually approached the original as if by chance. But two or three times I was obliged to be satisfied with an approximation. Instead of

De' beati il santo coro
Ha dischiuso l'ali d'oro
Tre le stelle un inno va:
Natal!

which is the libretto version, I wrote:

De' beati il santo coro
Ha spiegato l'ali d'oro
Nella notte un inno va:
Natal!

which Romualdi considered to be the version which he had set originally. So from that day, for two long months, there began a monotonous regular routine, but contrary to my expectations, it was not at all boring or tiresome. Quite the contrary, my dear friend, and to be quite honest, I recall that I felt almost happy. I lived in a sort of dream, free of responsibility, without ambition. I was carefree and of a peaceful mind, freed from the duty of being myself.

'I shared my time and my very thoughts between Romualdi and Dolores, and as both were people whom I would have avoided under normal conditions, or at most spent a very short time with them every day (to Romualdi I would have dedicated those rare and scattered instants necessary to giving the entrances at rehearsals; to Dolores just a few moments), I felt myself to be a new individual.

'In the morning I stayed in bed until noon. At nine o'clock Caterina brought my coffee. Romualdi was already up and shaved. He rises every morning at eight o'clock. Then his programme was to go to the Square, wait for the post and newspapers, have a chat with Signor Sandro, with the chemist, with the doctor, with the village priest, and then return in time for lunch with the latest news from 'official circles' and with the latest rumours on the progress of the war. I, meanwhile, had spent my time in bed reading. Dolores had quite a good collection of French novels by such authors as Colette, Gyp, Marcel Prévost; there were also many by France, and even Proust. I had with me in my haversack an Ariosto, a Leopardi, a Racine and a Shakespeare.

'At half past twelve, Dolores, who was very worried over the appearance of wrinkles, also spent the morning in bed, and was waiting for us in the garden behind the house. Here, seated on little iron chairs around a stone table, we drank vermouth, and Romualdi gave us the latest gossip. At one o'clock we had lunch. We ate very well.

'I began to tire of this kind of life, just before Christmas. I had met Dolores on the 25th October. So this *affaire* lasted much longer than any other. Dolores was kind, discreet and endowed with common sense. She was careful to make herself scarce at the right moment, and put up with her own company for a considerable time. She indulged in long baths for slimming, Swedish drill and massage. She disappeared after lunch and was not seen again until six in the evening. I spent the afternoons with Romualdi writing out music, and especially the parts for the Mendelssohn pieces. Of course, these arrangements were my own but Romualdi naïvely thought that they were his. We talked about the war, and what would happen after the war, and made long and endless speculations: Russia will do this, America will do that. And I enjoyed wallowing in that sea of clichés.

'Yes, I am guilty in regard to Romualdi, guilty of having deceived him, and I'm really sorry for it. But I am guilty, too, in regard to myself, because there came a time after a few days of this life in common

when I began to believe in my own pretence. For example Romualdi used to say Montgomery is a great General and I'll explain why (on the third day we already spoke familiarly to each other)—

'"Look here," (we had before us a touring club map) "he has made a feint towards the Gargano to fool the Germans. That's what in strategy is called false objective. Then he turned back with an encircling movement and got them where he wanted them." (And as he said this, I remember he described a circle with his hand, the gesture of a confectioner shaping a torcetto[1].) At first when Romualdi talked in this fashion, I realised that he was retailing to me the tittle-tattle from the village chemist's shop, and gaping at him as if he were an oracle and careful not to show any signs of boredom or irony, I always agreed with him. But as time went on, I couldn't remain silent all the time, and it seemed useless to contradict him, so I began, myself, out of courtesy to talk like him in clichés, which I found difficult to do at first, but afterwards found easier and easier, until, unconsciously I began to relish those words and after the words the thoughts they represented, lazy words like those in doggerel verses, lazy thoughts divorced from reality. At the end of a week, I was myself another Romualdi, and Romualdi seemed to me a great man, a wise man, a master schooled in the ways of the world. I remembered his paternal gesture when he had urged me to go to Dolores. I remembered how kind he was to Dolores during the bombing, and in a sense, dwelling on the revelation of that night, I placidly believed in Romualdi as in a friend. Does this good faith which I obtained on the seventh day alleviate or aggravate my sin?

'I think it aggravates it, because I reached that state of mind gradually, in a sense doping my conscience by small continual doses of self-abasement, and because in one respect, in spite of everything, I was never in good faith—music. Whenever we started talking about music, and in particular on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, as we climbed the pebbly lane to go to the monastery for choir practice, I felt inwardly ashamed. And when we appeared in front of the girls and the Brothers (towards the end the rehearsals were carried out in the little theatre in the presence of the Brothers), I say when we appeared, Romualdi in front of myself deferentially following in his wake with the music folio under my arm, and when I sat at the harmonium and sounded an "A", I felt as I pressed the pedal as if I would like a trap-door to open so that I could bury myself in the earth rather than degrade myself in such a way. What was most degrading was that I had to accompany instead of conducting. Mind, it wasn't vanity on my part, but just sheer professional pride. To see him beating time with those plump soft hands (I didn't know that he was a timpani player; I didn't dare ask him what his instrument was, and I don't know how he can manage the drumsticks so energetically with hands like his, and yet this morning I saw him and there's no doubt he's a good player, there's no denying)—well, as I was saying, to see him beating time with those plump, soft hands, to see him giving all the entrances late, I suffered as if someone had done me physical harm and I had to steal myself not to look, and press hard on the pedals and play as badly as I could. When the practice was over, my wrath evaporated. I immediately forgot the torture I had been through. Romualdi returned to conduct my life, as always when he was not conducting the choir.

'As I have said, when we had rehearsals, we had dinner at the monastery; otherwise, at the villa, at half past eight. Then, if the weather was fine, and it was practically always, we went for a walk with Dolores along the road to Vinchiaturo. The village and the monastery were isolated from any large or small through-road. We were in an isolated valley. The road stopped there. Very few Germans came, and only for a short time. We were safe and undisturbed; as far as we could see, we could wait cheerfully until the Allies came.

'Then, on the 4th December, we heard the sound of gunfire, so remote at first that we mistook it for distant thunder. Then gradually every day it got louder and nearer. The Eighth Army was advancing slowly. As I said before, it was only just before Christmas that I began to weary of this way of life. The guns approaching—the thought that I could cross the lines in a

[1] A sort of pastry like an English brandy-snap

few days' march; on the other hand, the fear that in January or February there would be another long pause in the advance; and last, but not least, the fact that I had to be with Dolores every night regularly, that I had to make conversation with her over vermouth at meals and during our evening walks. All these things persuaded me that it was time to go. I had raised the subject some time before with Romualdi and had found him in favour of it. He had his son over there, and every time that the B.B.C. broadcast the famous secret messages: "The cow hasn't any milk," or "The mill hasn't any water" or "Maria sings badly" or "The most beautiful flower is the rose"—he, I could never understand whether out of vanity before me and Dolores (and in that case he must have thought little of our intelligence) or out of genuine naïveté, maintained that some of these broadcasts might contain a private message for him from his son, and he racked his brains, or pretended to, in order to decipher them. Perhaps the message meant: "Father, I'm well, I'm with the Eighth Army, try to join me, or—I'm with the Fifth Army, I'm at Naples," etc. He counted the syllables, the vowels, the contents. He was most keen, or he pretended to be, to find out if his son was in the Eighth or the Fifth Army. The Eighth Army was No. 8, the Fifth Army No. 5, and five and eight could be interpreted either from the number of syllables in the message or from the number of the first letter: five was the letter E and eight the letter H.

'Of course, these messages in cypher referred to parachute drops, supplies dropped by air for partisan formations, or other operations all framed in code.

'It was logical. I can't say that I was honest when I listened seriously to the absurd calculations which Romualdi produced. But any way, he fell in with my plan to cross the lines; he said he was a great expert on tactics, and so with the touring club map he soon began to study the route we should have to take. He had been in the 1915–18 war as an artillery lieutenant, and had been promoted to captain for service in the field. He knew what to do. All I had to do was to trust in him and he would get me safely across the lines.

We decided to leave on the 27th December. The 25th was Christmas Day and we had the concert up at the monastery after the midnight mass. That left us the 26th for the last preparation, and we would be away on the dawn of the 27th. We did not hide our intention or our decision from Dolores. She had tried to persuade us with an infinity of arguments and entreaties, but finally she had to resign herself to the fact. During the last days, when she knew that we intended definitely to leave and the date was fixed, she became very sentimental and almost maternal towards us. She rose early in the morning and came in her dressing-gown, instead of Caterina, to bring us our coffee. She was more expansive. She mentioned her dreams of an engagement, perhaps a marriage; my view was that the whole thing would be over very shortly, and so I didn't lose my temper. One morning, she found me reading Leopardi and made a scene because I wouldn't read some poems aloud. I hate reading poetry to women, but I can tolerate even less their scenes. So I read for her *Silvia* and *Le ricordanze e Il Primo Amore*. I admit that, while I read, I did not feel self-conscious as perhaps I should have, and as I should now if I had to face a similar *corvée*. As I read, I glanced up at her curly head, the nape of her neck, the brown skin and her ample breasts showing through the loosely-fastened dressing-gown. I felt her warm body against me leaning on the bed, and I was moved and wept with her. In a word, it was all an unpleasant mix-up: a confusion of feelings and thoughts which I would never have tolerated at any other moment of my life. But I tell you I had become someone else—the daily company of Romualdi had transformed me; I was really Ragioniere Premoli reading Leopardi to his sweetheart.

'Then came Christmas Eve. During the mass, at the elevation of the Host, the chorus from Werther was performed. After the service, we went down to the theatre. A very beautiful nativity scene had been set up on the stage. While the monks distributed gifts to the village children, the two pieces of Mendelssohn were performed. *Margheritine anemoni* was a great success and we had to give an encore.

'As I've said before, I suffered having to listen to the pieces. To take my mind off them, and above all to avoid seeing Romualdi's hands as he conducted, I turned in the other direction. The harmonium was right in the centre of the stage; on the left I had the girls' choir and Romualdi; on the right the nativity scene.

'I gazed at it while I was playing. There were some most beautiful little carved coloured wooden figures of the Neopolitan school of the eighteenth century. The animals particularly enchanted me—they were so varied, alive, expressive and in a way humorous, and I was struck most of all by a white and grey puppy with clipped ears, his nose in the air, and eyes which looked right at you . . . that one there!'

W. pointed at the little dog on his writing desk, but I had anticipated him, realising that that was the one. I asked W. if the Brothers had given it to him as a souvenir in gratitude for what he had done for them.

'No, I stole it,' W. immediately replied. 'The applause at the end of the second Mendelssohn piece was endless. Romualdi, tremendously bucked by his success, leaned towards me and breathed "Let's give an encore, come on!" In reply, irritated and annoyed, I began to play the accompaniment with only the left hand. It wasn't at all difficult, but only an experienced pianist could have done it. Romualdi was not looking and so noticed nothing unusual. And then I was so annoyed that I didn't care any more. Meanwhile, I cautiously with my right hand pulled towards me a corner of the carpet upon which the moss and the whole model rested, and so brought nearer the little dog. I grasped it. As I continued to play, I studied it closely in every detail (what marvellous and minute work from grey back to the white stomach—it's a masterpiece); then I replaced it. The chorus went on and on; twice or three times I took hold of the little dog, only to replace it every time. Finally, during the uproar of the applause, I rose, and covering with my body that corner of the model in such a way that nobody in the pit, monk or one of the public, could see me, I put it in my pocket and that was that.

'I am not a kleptomaniac; it was the only time I ever stole anything, or felt an irresistible desire to steal. I was exasperated, and completely fed up with Romualdi and the whole business. I reacted in the only way I could, in a crazy way. That is why, I think, I stole this puppy.

'But a few moments afterwards, at the end of the piece and as soon as Romualdi laid down his baton, as usual all feelings of indignation and impatience faded away. We went up to the refectory by a stone stairway, mingling with the Brothers who were profuse in their compliments to Romualdi and myself, but in particular to Romualdi for the success of the concert. I turned suddenly and my glance met his. His eyes were full of tears of joy. It came to me like a flash: Romualdi had never been so happy; perhaps he never would be again. I was ignorant of his past, his youthful aspirations, his career, his struggles, his sacrifices, but even if I had never suspected it before, those tears were clear proof that he had never before tasted success. And once again, I felt an indescribable liking for him. Putting my hand in my pocket, I tentatively felt the little dog, not knowing clearly why I had stolen it. If its setting had been there, I would have put it back in place. We dined royally that night in the refectory. They had lit braziers in the four corners and in the fireplace there was a large blaze. It was wonderful. They brought on to the table roast lamb, bottles of Gragnano and plates of a kind of buttermilk, and to round it off some Pantelaria wine, and though usually I don't like sweet wines, I remember it was magnificent.

'It was late when we left the monastery, and I remember now that clear cold air, frosty stars in the sky which was not black but really a dark blue, and the black circle of mountains around. I was about to say goodbye to the Brothers for two days after we should be gone, but Romualdi prevented me, advising me to say nothing. Now, since the concert was over, we had no further obligations to the monastery. We could just disappear, but it would be unwise to mention that we wanted to cross the lines. Once more I was convinced that Romualdi was gifted with a common sense and shrewdness which I did not possess. The heavy door closed behind us, and we

walked to the edge of the great terrace overlooking the entrance to the monastery. The sound of guns was never silent and was nearer than it had ever been, but we had grown used to it and we noticed it only in moments like this, when we were silent and there was nothing to do. We slowly went down to the village, arm in arm, and for a long time, no one spoke. I looked up at the stars and thought:

> *A che tante facelle?*
> *Che fa l'aria infinita, e quel profondo*
> *infinito seren? Che vuol dir questa*
> *solitudine immensa? Ed io, che sono?*

A heap of questions which usually one keeps to oneself. But that night it seemed to me quite natural to talk to Romualdi.

'I was the first to break the silence. "When you hear the sound of guns and look up at the stars, it doesn't seem to make sense. What's the reason for this war? What's the reason for any war? Why do people die? Why are they born? Why are they afflicted with such sufferings? We are so small and insignificant, there are infinite worlds, infinitely far away, and infinitely greater than ours. Why do we insist on living as if we were immense and the most important creations in the Universe? And above all, why all these questions? Why, unlike the animals, are we capable of formulating all these questions even if we don't know the answers?"

'Romualdi sighed deeply and said:

' "When these thoughts occur to me, I dismiss them. Otherwise, I go round in circles. It's a sort of madness. Because, you see, I, by inclination, am rather religious. My mother was very religious. My father was a materialist but he respected my mother's religion. I grew up, as the saying goes, at my mother's apron strings. It was she who instilled in me these principles. I, too, was a regular church-goer until I entered the Conservatoire. This I did rather late in life. As a boy I attended elementary and secondary schools. My father was a Government auditor, and wanted me to get my degree in law. But at school I was not very diligent; I was crazy about music, and I studied music at home with my mother. Instead of doing my homework, I would watch her while she practised the harp. My mother was first harp at the Teatro Argentina. So there grew up a sort of antagonism between my mother and my father. She wanted me to devote myself to music and he insisted that I should take up law. I must have been about five when I began to pick out the notes on the harp. Then my mother bought a piano and I studied at home. But when I failed twice running in my examinations at secondary school, it was my father who angrily entered me for the Conservatoire. Poor chap, his view was that either one did a thing or one didn't, but if one did a thing it was essential to do it well."

'Romualdi talked on, and once more I felt the pangs of remorse for my deceit. Here, I thought to myself, this man is telling me the most intimate details of his life, and I have told him nothing about myself. Even worse, what I have told him has been largely untrue. I was repentant, and while he spoke, I was already thinking of beginning my confession to him that night. It was Christmas: what better occasion could there be, I thought? It's now or never. Meanwhile Romualdi went on.

' "At the Conservatoire I lost my faith. For a few years I went to Mass, and then I gave it up. I married late. As soon as I left the Conservatoire, I began to lead a gay life; ah, yes, if I told you about all the mistresses I've had, my boy, but the war interrupted that fine life. I went back to it in 1919, I was still young then. In Genoa . . ."

'As he said Genoa, he lowered his voice, he stopped in the middle of the path, put a hand on my shoulder—it was a protective, paternal gesture which had become a habit with him, and which I must admit I enjoyed for some reason—and he half-closed his eyes, looking into the blackness of the night as if he could see his own past once more.

' "In Genoa in 1919 I had a mistress, and what a mistress! She must have been one in a million, you don't find that sort today. Her name was Beby—she was a fly-piece, of course. Spoiled, and uncontrollable. She had all the vices; she was Lesbian, a drug-addict, what a woman!" I looked at him while he spoke, and his eyes were closed in an expression of bliss, and he smiled in a self-satisfied sort of way, convinced that he had *lived*, and that

he could teach me how to live. He went on:

'"I remember well, I was playing at the Carlo Felice Opera House; Beby would wait for me at one o'clock in the morning when the Opera finished. She would wait in a little restaurant in one of those little streets which lead off from Piazza Deferrari; in Genoa they call them *carugi*. At that time they still had gas light. There you could eat oysters, lobsters, sea truffles and mussels, those black ones which they call *muscoli* in Genoa, and wonderful fried baby octopi (calamaretti), in Genoa they call them . . . they call them . . . then we went up to Piazza Fontane Marose. She had a furnished room, with a separate entrance, and there we had some orgies. Sometimes a friend of hers would come along, a brunette. Beby was tall, with magnificent blonde hair—and we used to make love, the three of us, and you should have seen how jealous she was of the brunette! She could do what she wanted; she was in the middle. But I wasn't allowed to do anything with the brunette. Now, my boy, remember that if one day when the war is over, you come, and I hope you will come, to have a meal at my home in Rome, not a word of this to my wife. Ah, I've remembered, *moscardini*, that's what they call calamaretti in Genoa . . ."

'He stopped. I was silent too. How could I go on? Apart from the desire to confess, it seemed to me I had no other sins.

'Twenty-four hours later, at dawn on the 27th, we left as arranged. I will pass over the goodbyes with Dolores, the tears and the last night of love. Moreover, Dolores was no longer what she had been. As soon as she had begun to put on a sentimental, wifely, maternal act, she had lost her sparkle and dash. Her stupid, vulgar, selfish and cheap literary nature was irresistible as long as our relations were limited to pleasure, because in certain cases, pleasure is all the more keen when it contradicts one's thoughts: beyond pleasure, thoughts and feelings came to the surface.

'On the first day we went up the mountain, reached the top and descended into the next valley at Riofreddo, where Caterina, Dolores's maid, had a relative who had been warned, and who expected us. It was a long and strenuous journey, because a little further up from the monastery we ran into snow and we had to walk through it almost until we got to Riofreddo, but we had stout shoes. It was a clear, cold day. The path which was regularly used was easily recognisable. At Riofreddo we slept on the ground, on some mattresses which Caterina's cousin had put for us in the kitchen, the only room with heating in the house. In spite of my weariness, and the large amount of food and wine which I had consumed in the hope of sinking into a torpor, I was not impervious to the ready and prolonged visit paid me by the usual unwelcome guests which you find in Southern Italy, this after being free from them for about two months. So that the only, and to me most unwelcome, effect of the food and wine was that Romualdi, who was anyway immune to the attacks of the bugs, snored loudly and incessantly from the moment we went to bed until the time we woke up.

'On the second day, Caterina's cousin acted as guide for some distance, until we were in sight of the lines. We had got as far as a little village high up on a snow-covered ridge, which, according to what we were told, and as far as we could see, the Germans had already abandoned. That village, or rather that group of houses, was called Trabandoli, and overlooked the major valley, and so high that from a little square overlooking the church could be seen beyond the parallel terraced heights which separated the smaller valleys, the bottom of the major valley, and the straight ribbon of the provincial road, and on a clear day the movement of road traffic. We were moving north in the direction of Sulmona. The Allies! Romualdi and I immediately thought, but the villagers, informed by lads who plied between the village and the main road for the express purpose of watching for the first sign of the approaching Allies, told us that they were Germans in retreat. The Allies were only a very few kilometres away. Perhaps they had already reached Vinchiaturo. It was impossible to say exactly when they would arrive, but they would not be long; it was a question of hours, or at most of a few days. If the Germans wanted to stop them before they

reached Trabandoli, they would have to make a defensive line, dividing Trabandoli from Vinchiaturo, and there was not the slightest sign of any similar operation. So we decided to avoid running the useless risk of crossing minefields, and to stop and wait for the Allies' arrival in Trabandoli.

'We spent the entire day looking for a place to sleep. The village consisted of a few filthy hovels, one of them consisting of two rooms at the most, where entire families with many babies and old people slept together with animals in unbearable filth and stench. We applied to the parish priest, flaunting the usual letter from the Bishop of Iesi. But he was rude and suspicious and insisted that the Church house was full of evacuees, and that he could not offer us hospitality. In the end we decided on the cobbler-barber's shop. It was very small, but a little less dirty than all the other rooms we had seen, and at least we would not have to share the space with other creatures—goats or Christians.

'The cobbler-barber, an old Italo-American, who had been back in Italy for more than thirty years, was frenziedly awaiting the Allies. I said a few words in English to him, and he jumped to the conclusion that we were American spies preparing the advance. When we protested that we were refugees from Rome, he chuckled to himself saying:

' "All right, I know, I know", and kept on winking at us. He had black, cunning eyes, half hidden by thick white eyebrows.

'The trouble was that I had to sleep next to Romualdi on the ground, on a rather narrow mattress. The Italo-American had given us, with the blankets, a single mattress, and in the shop between the cobbler's bench and the barber's chair, there was no more room. It was a torment which I cannot describe. For three interminable nights I didn't close my eyes. I was paying for my sin, for my deceit, and for the malicious enjoyment which I had in striking up the friendship with Romualdi. Until then I had never experienced anything quite like it. I had always avoided physical proximity to this man whom I had pretended to like, and had almost convinced myself that I did. For two months a heavy velvet curtain had separated our rooms, and anyway, I spent a large part of the nights with Dolores. Now I was forced to lie elbow to elbow, squashed against his fat body. His slightest movement, his very breathing reached me and made me shudder with distaste. My nose was often crushed against his shoulder or his back, and I saw for hours on end right up against my eyes the shaggy fabric of the green jacket. It was so cold that we slept fully dressed and swathed in the same blankets, because there were very few of them. Fate or Providence could not have chosen for me a more suitable punishment. For two months I had renounced myself. I had pretended to be someone else, a shadow, a puppet, in order to bring myself down to Romualdi's level, and to become part of him, and now I was condemned through the long hours of the icy cold night in mid-winter in the mountains to lie awake stuck close to him. Of course, he was asleep. He snored. His snores nearly drove me mad as they grew louder and louder. He had a cold. Every evening, to keep ourselves warm, we drank a lot of wine. Anyway, I shrank from waking him, or even telling him about it the following morning. Yes, even that, because to raise the subject would have been to confirm, to admit, to draw attention to our intimacy. There are some things a man does not talk about to anyone, except I imagine to his wife, and then only after some years of marriage. So it seemed to me that if I spoke to him about it, I would establish between myself and Romualdi some sort of unpleasant matrimonial relationship, so I harboured within myself my repugnance like a minor disease. And yet now I see that even in that I was wrong. If I had raised the subject, we could have together sought some practical solution. That's what friends do. What am I saying? That's what man does with his fellow. The truth was, now I can see it, that I wanted that feeling of repugnance. I don't say that I enjoyed it, but I wanted it. My lying in silence, suffering and enduring that odious contact for three long nights was not as I told you—because until this moment it seemed so to me—punishment for a crime. While I speak to you, I understand and I explain to myself for the first time how things really were. No, it was not, or perhaps it was not only

punishment for my erring ways. It was the exasperation of my sins. Because there was behind all that sickening suffering, now I can see it clearly, a very subtle exasperated pleasure. What pleasure? The same old one, in which I lost my own identity, not only in my intelligence and in my tastes, but now in addition in my senses and in my most intimate senses, like touch and smell. Of course it was an absurd contradiction. I could not have experienced this pleasure if I had not at the same time suffered. I could not have been able to feel myself physically another person, if at the same time I could not have continued to feel myself me. The touch and smell of Romualdi's body attracted me precisely because they revolted me. In that extreme and forced proximity, I could perceive the different contact and the different odour of my own body.

'On the morning of the third day, the boys acting as scouts returned to the village, running and shouting. The Americans were coming; they were arriving with their trucks. They were almost here; the boys showed the villagers who were still incredulous the proof of tins of biscuits, sweets, pork and beans.

'In an hour the Americans were at Trabandoli. The same day, parleying in English with a sergeant, I persuaded him to take us in his jeep to Vinchiaturo. At Vinchiaturo we presented ourselves to a Captain in AMGOT as two anti-Fascist refugees. We had been persecuted, I because I was a Jew, Romualdi because he had been President of the Musicians' Union during the Badoglio Government. A truck was leaving that same night for Bari. The Captain told us that there was the Radio Station at Bari where we could find work. He provided us with a pass and a letter of presentation for Major Wyatt in charge of Radio Bari.

'Major Wyatt was a fat, flabby, pallid young man with fairish hair and an absent-minded, sleepy air. We were shown into his office at the radio station shortly before midnight. He was sitting at a table covered in papers and was smoking his pipe with his eyes half-closed. He seemed so mild in his appearance that Romualdi immediately plucked up courage. He went at great length to tell the story of his anti-Fascist past—how he had been nominated President of the Musicians during the forty-five days, talked of his son who had crossed the lines, and even asked for news of him, and was quite astonished when the Major said he didn't know him. He concluded, proudly saying that he had played in a Mendelssohn concerto, notwithstanding the Nazis' prohibition of his works. The Major listened, nodded his approval, and said that at the Radio they had need of musicians and that there was work for him to do immediately. What instrument did he play? Romualdi hesitated for a moment (at that moment I suffered for him, perhaps more than him), and then replied that he was a conductor.

'Major Wyatt was not disconcerted, and nodded his approval again. Then he turned to me. I said that I was Jewish and a bank clerk. Yes, he could find work for me too. He asked if we had had dinner. We said we had. Then he called a sergeant, and fixing an appointment for us for the next morning at nine o'clock in the same office, he gave instructions for us to be shown our sleeping quarters. Once again, we were given one room. There were two camp beds, one on each side with plenty of blankets. We were not in such cramped quarters as during the preceding nights; but I knew that if he started to snore, I would not be able to sleep.

'We undressed slowly and in silence. Romualdi hung his green jacket on a chair, fumbled in his pockets, cleaned his handkerchief and went through his usual nightly ritual. I cursed quietly inwardly in rage. It seemed fantastic that with the arrival of the Allies, my venture showed no sign of finishing. I felt the need of resuming my own work, my own life, of returning to be myself. The liberators had come; I too wanted my liberty. Instead, the following morning at the Radio, I would have to maintain my usual pretence and help Romualdi to conduct the small orchestra. Was this possible?

'I had one sure means of gaining recognition from the Allies—a warm letter of recommendation from no other than B.B.[1]

'B.B., as you know, stayed in Florence during the war in semi-hiding or existed in a villa near Fiesole. Foreseeing that it would be indispensable to me, I had sewn

[1] i.e. Bernard Berenson—*Ed.*

the letter into the double lining of my haversack. I unpacked the haversack, and ripped open the lining. As I did so, the little puppy from the Nativity model fell out. Since we had left Dolores's house, I had never completely unpacked the haversack, and Romualdi had not yet seen the object I had taken. When I put it on the bed, he immediately noticed it.

' "What's that little dog?" he asked.

' "I stole it from the representation of the Nativity at the monastery while I was playing, on Christmas Eve," I flared up.

' "You stole it; are you mad?"

' "Why, are you going to report me, are you going to get me arrested?"

' "What rubbish! But I don't understand why you stole it."

' "Because I wanted to; I'm a kleptomaniac, didn't you know? Are you quite sure you haven't missed anything?"

'He didn't reply at once; he looked at me amazed, and rather frightened. He had never heard me talk like that; he seemed to be talking to another man.

'He recovered his composure in the end and, slowly getting into bed, said, in a profoundly disgusted tone:

' "I think you're mad. Whatever made you commit a theft? If they find out . . . The monastery isn't so far from the lines, and the Allies will get there tomorrow or the day after and we'll lose our place at the Radio."

'I burst into noisy, nervous laughter. At length I said:

' "I'm fed up." I was really nasty. "That's why I stole it; do you want it? I'll give it to you. Just a little something for you to remember me by. We shan't be living together for always. I'm going back to Bologna."

' "Bologna is a long way away. You've got to cross the Apennines, and I'm afraid the winter . . ."

' "I'll get back to Bologna before you think," I shouted, beside myself.

' "Take this dog, take it, take it," and so saying, I went up to his bed, and laid the little animal gently on his pillow. He seized it and hurled it recklessly into the middle of the room. It might have broken, but it didn't, fortunately. It was a matrimonial tiff. I'd had enough. I had in my hand B.B.'s letter. I said nothing. I put on my boots, and just said:

' "Goodnight. I'm going to take a walk. I need air. I'll be back soon. Goodnight."

'He didn't reply. I put out the light and went out. I ran down to Major Wyatt. He was still where I left him. He was smoking his pipe and drinking whisky. I gave him the letter, and speaking this time in good English (in Romualdi's presence I had

pretended to speak it rather badly), I said that for reasons of discretion and security, since B.B. was in hiding near Florence, and no one was supposed to know that he was in Italy, I had not been able to declare myself before Romualdi. When he heard the name of B.B., and when he saw that signature, the Major's eyes finally opened wide. They were light blue like those of a baby. He smiled broadly and quietly got to his feet, took a glass, offered me some whisky and we drank; then he said that he was at my disposal—what could he do for me? I said I wanted to leave immediately for Naples. That same night if possible. It would be better not to say anything to my companion. All that need be said on the following day was that I had been given another job. He was purely a chance travelling companion; I didn't know him well.

'There were cars going to and fro between Bari and Naples at all hours; it was the easiest thing in the world. He called a sergeant. He wrote a note for the Head of P.W.B. at Naples and he gave it to me, shaking me by the hand,

' "Have a good trip, Maestro."

'I was no longer Ragioniere Premoli!

'The sergeant was waiting for me at the foot of the stairs to take me to the car pool. I went up first to collect my things. I didn't put on the light in the bedroom, and in order to see, I left the corridor door open.

'Romualdi was alseep and snoring. While I hastily packed my bag, I looked at him. I no longer felt angry towards him. I looked at him as if from a distance, in a detached sort of way, in rather a melancholy manner as if he were a memory. He was sleeping on his back, a fat motionless form buried in the bed, with his brown pyjamas with green stripes, just as he was that night when he told me:

' "Opportunities—the best opportunities are so few, and opportunity knocks but once."

'Naturally, I was tempted to wake him. But to what end? A few minutes' explanation were not sufficient. I would have to talk to him for hours. The sergeant was waiting; and what could I have said to Romualdi? No, No! I had acted despicably and so I had to leave despicably, by night, quietly, while he slept innocently. My bag was ready; I hoisted it on to my shoulder. I moved a step nearer to Romualdi's bed to see him better—to see him for the last time, I thought.

'I looked at him for a long time. In order not to wake him, I held back my tears. I still thought a lot of him, you understand; yes, I thought a lot of him, as one can of all the men on this earth, of any man if one has to live with him, has to understand him, has to be near him.

'The sergeant whistled. I had to decide. I left the room. Until this morning, I had not seen Romualdi again, neither did I know anything about him. Believe me, nobody is a complete fool; no one is at bottom inferior and no one is superior. We are all really equal. But what is there in us which forces us to refuse to act as equals? Why have we this cruel duty of being each one of us himself? And how can we reconcile this duty with that other duty which we also feel no less strongly—that of recognising our equality?'

* * *

He had got up. He went to the window. The sky over the dark mass of the Pincio was lighter. Dawn. At ten o'clock the orchestra and the singers would be in the theatre. I had to snatch a few hours' sleep. I said goodbye to W., thanking him for his story, which I said had, at any rate, interested me very much. I said that I understood; I understood everything perfectly, but that we ought to sleep on it, and tomorrow we would decide what to do.

'There's nothing to be done,' he replied, 'Call Rossi'.

'Rossi—or somebody else.'

'Rossi's very good.'

'We'll see', I said and made to go. But meanwhile, Paola had wakened. W. asked me to see her home, as he felt too tired. I consented, of course, but I was surprised that the girl was not staying at the same hotel. W. accompanied us to the lifts. He caressed Paola's cheek, apologising for having treated her so boorishly. The girl, half asleep, smiled and said nothing. As we went down in the lift, I saw W. through the glass returning slowly towards his own room. At half past nine I was in the theatre. I had a plan. I sent my chauffeur

to Romualdi's house to bring him because I wanted to speak to him urgently before the rehearsal. I waited for him in my office. He came in, humbly stooping, almost hunch-backed, with an old hat in his hand, wearing a dirty, worn raincoat. He seemed sad and worried. He seemed older than he was. I went towards him, and made him sit down on the divan. I sat down with him and began to speak to him kindly.

'It's come to my knowledge,' I said, 'that Maestro W. and you are great friends.'

'Friends, of course not,' he protested with a vigour and dignity which contrasted violently with his entrance.

'We knew each other by chance in the mountains during the war. We sought refuge in the same village, but I didn't even know his real name. That's all there is to it.'

'And yet,' I insisted, 'I know that you and the Maestro were good companions for quite a long time.'

'What do you expect? There was no one else to talk to up in those mountains; that was all there was to it.'

'I am going to ask you a great favour, my dear Romualdi.'

'I really don't see what I can do.'

'I'll tell you now. Maestro W. is considering not conducting *Otello*. He's tired, he doesn't feel well. He was seen yesterday by two doctors whom I called and they said that he has a bad nervous breakdown. Now you'll understand that this is a serious thing for him. I was banking a lot on this production of *Otello*. It was to be the *pièce de resistance* of the Festival. You know that very well. All seats have been sold for six performances. Unless I want the public to ask for their money back, I must substitute W. by a de Sabata, and how can I find a de Sabata just like that? At short notice?'

'Well, there's Maestro Rossi who's a first-class conductor, and who knows *Otello* very well. He conducted it years ago at the Opera.'

'That's no use to me. It's precisely because he conducted it at the Opera that I'm not at all interested in him conducting this new production now.'

'The singers are much better.'

'Well, that's my business; are you trying to teach me my job?'

I was annoyed, and amazed at finding such resistance.

'Well, as I was saying, if W. doesn't conduct, I run the risk of grave losses. I thought that if you went personally, this morning, immediately, to the Hotel de la Ville where Maestro W. is staying, you can take my car, and if you tried to put in a good word to persuade him, in view of your friendship . . .'

'I assure you, Commendatore,' Romualdi interrupted me, rising to his feet, 'that there is no friendship between me and Maestro W. I have said so and I repeat it. I'm sorry, I'm very sorry, but I cannot possibly do what you ask.'

'I would be grateful, most grateful,' I said, emphasising the word 'most', to make him understand that I would have made it worth his while.

'Thank you', he replied, after a moment's silence, as if to make it quite clear that he had understood perfectly, and that he rejected any suggestion of compensation. Then he sat down again, and bending slightly towards me so that beneath his half-open jacket I could see a strange green waistcoat which strongly resembled the famous jacket now reduced to a waistcoat, he murmured:

'Let me tell you, my dear Commendatore, let me tell you something. I'm an old orchestral player, and I've seen many conductors, and I've played in many operas. I've played with Marinuzzi, with Panizza, and with Toscanini, and I can tell you that this is a piece of good fortune for you. You ask me to speak to Maestro W. and persuade him. Well, dear Commendatore, I can't do this, but even if I could, it would be a step that I could not recommend for your good, my dear Commendatore. Pardon me if I speak to you like this. I realise, of course, that I have no right to. But Maestro Rossi is a very fine conductor. And for *Otello*, you really need a strong personality. Well now, Maestro W.—he might be able to do it, but he's really quite a novice.'

I thanked him, sent him away, and phoned Rossi, who was in the theatre in half an hour. After a fortnight, *Otello* was produced according to plan. There were

three of us in a box overlooking the stage —Paola, W. and myself. Our glances, even those of Paola, because the girl that night, I found out afterwards, had not been asleep, but had pretended to be and had heard everything—our glances were fixed on Romualdi.

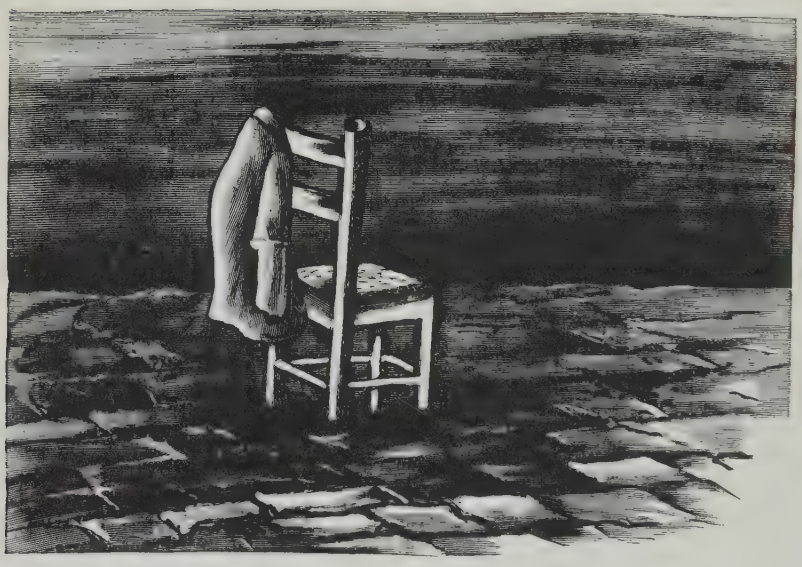
He must have seen us too—the timpani were right opposite us, but he didn't show the slightest sign that he did. And although W. remained in the shadow of the box, I was sure that Romualdi had spotted him when I noticed the double-bass player who was near him lean towards him and murmur something pointing in our direction.

Romualdi looked away with insolent indifference towards the stage.

The Opera went so-so. That evening, no one, neither Rossi nor the tenor, nor Desdemona, nor Iago, had much of a success. Perhaps there was one man who did, and only for himself and us three: Romualdi. You should have seen him as he caressed his instruments proudly, lovingly and with self-assurance. You should have seen the determined expression on his round face as he bent over each skin, and tapping it to check the tuning, put his ear down to it and half closed his eyes. You should have heard the unrestrained vigour of his crescendo rolls and the triumphant authority with which he wielded his drumsticks—now striking the timpani, once, twice, raising the beaters, and holding them in mid-air.

Illustrated by LEO LONGANESI

Translated by GWYN MORRIS



2

THE PINCUSHION

L. P. HARTLEY

(A chapter taken from L. P. Hartley's forthcoming novel My Fellow Devils. *Margaret Pennefather takes Colum, her new and showy fiancé, home to meet her father. Colum is an actor. On his account she has broken her engagement to a sensible barrister named Nick.)*

MARGARET dreaded Colum's visit to Fair Haven but she was determined it should take place. He, on the other hand, did not seem to dread it at all. 'I know I shall like your father,' he said, 'and I think he will like me when he sees me.' Margaret felt more than doubtful about this; Colum was nothing if not self-confident, and self-confidence was a quality her father did not care for either in men or women. 'I see,' said Colum, when she told him this, 'I will just be reasonably self-reliant, and no more.'

One of the reasons why she got on well with Colum was that it was easy to say no to him. Nick, with whom she sometimes compared him, was a difficult man to disagree with. He felt a minor disagreement as if it was a breach; he seemed to think their whole relationship threatened if he did not see eye to eye with her in the smallest matter, and he was too sensitive not to show it. Hurt, he appeared at his worst—sulky and spoilt, which he was not. His behaviour after the party had looked like an exhibition of pique, but Margaret was more and more convinced that what had really upset him was not so much his wounded feelings as his inability to hide them. Happy in her love for Colum, she was able to make allowances for everybody, and Nick benefited retrospectively.

With Colum, disagreements and refusals went like water off a duck's back. He would insist on having his own way, or would let her have hers, and the operation was as clean and antiseptic as if a surgeon had done it—no inflammatory edge was left behind. There were no sore places in their relationship.

So that, if she had to tell him that on second thoughts she had decided not to become a Catholic (she would never tell him the real reason) she would have no cause to dread an 'inevitable unpleasantness', for there would be none. Her own disappointment at being deprived of the opportunity to do him a service would be the thing she would have to reckon with. But still she could not quite make up her mind—unmade for her, as she now realised, by the priest. Detached from his presence, his persuasiveness had lost some of its force. With one hand he had taken from her something tangible—the hope of being of use to Colum; with the other he had given her something between a threat and a promise—the sound of a wind blowing in her mind, a footstep that might come nearer, an inarticulate voice that might one day speak. Was she still resentful towards it? She scarcely knew. The only sure way she knew of helping herself was to help others; it might not be as crude as the daily good deed of a boy scout; it might even be quite impersonal, as her public work was. But to give her spiritual satisfaction it must be the expression of a desire to be of advantage to other human beings. The idea of being in need of help herself was always a little distasteful to her; the idea of being in need of help from something not a person, for some inadequacy of which she was unaware, was completely alien. Yet the priest's words lingered in her mind.

At last the fateful Sunday came. Stuart and Diana were there to help her, but she was too nervous to talk much to them, and they were nervous too—even Diana had lost some of her aplomb. But most nervous of all was Mr. Pennefather, who in the course of the morning twice changed his suit, from his habitual dark Sunday wear to a sports coat and flannel trousers, and

then to an old suit of tussore silk which had not seen the light for many years and smelt of moth-balls. Margaret besought him to take it off but he was obdurate: in his heart he believed it had some kind of spiritual connection with Hollywood.

At last they heard the gravel scrunch, and Diana, who could not resist going to the window, saw a chromium and grey car drive up, sleek, shining and stream-lined, fulfilling her every expectation. Out jumped a chauffeur, whose grey uniform matched the car, and gave a new and even more formidable meaning to the word smart, and whose movements suggested quicksilver under strong control. The door was opened with the precision of a military exercise and Colum stepped out.

The chauffeur dived into the car and produced a square parcel the size of a large hat-box. After a short discussion as to which of them should carry it, the chauffeur took it, looking over the top of it with the outraged air that men who value their appearance sometimes wear when carrying a parcel. With measured tread he followed his master to the door, and out of Diana's sight. A moment later the parlour-maid announced the film star.

Looking at him through their eyes, Margaret saw another Colum, a man hardly above middle height, shorter indeed than Stuart or her father, aggressively clean and healthy, whose vitality of movement and vividness of expression made him at once dominate the room. His hair grew in a natural V above his temples. It was a valuable asset—as valuable as the lurking shadows in the hollows under his cheek bones—when he wanted to look sinister. But that was not his object now. He carried himself as if he were a flag—something that everyone would want to look at, and he went through the introductions as though he were making a present of himself to each in turn, though his manner with each was different: courtly with Diana, breezy with Stuart and deferential—a decided dimming of the headlights—with his host. To Margaret he just bowed. One and all, they felt their importance magnified and their awareness sharpened. That acquiescence in mediocrity and obscurity which dulls our faces and which we come to think of, however unwillingly, as a protection, was momentarily lifted, and they saw themselves not as well-to-do suburban nobodies, who would never be anything else, but as people with the world's spotlight on them, people worth watching. Colum was generous in many ways, but especially in his readiness to invest with his own lustre anyone he talked to. When he spoke of the celebrities he had met, he managed to imply that the rest of the company had met them also; so that instead of these important names being a barrier to fence him off and arouse envy in the breasts of the less fortunate, they became a common meeting-ground on the high places of fame.

Of Diana, Colum did not have to make a conquest—from the first she was his slave, and even Stuart, after the inevitable interval of wondering whether he was quite a gentleman, concluded that it didn't greatly matter if he wasn't. If either of them thought of the parallel occasion, not many months before, when they had met to hail Margaret's engagement, they did not think of it with regret, still less with irony: not from disloyalty to Nick, but from an unconscious respect for the decrees of life, which take no count of stragglers. And for Margaret the other celebration was as dim as a faded photograph beside a bright one. Only Mr. Pennefather thought wistfully of it. Partly it was that he did not altogether relish being impressed in his own house, and partly too because the qualities that impressed were foreign to him. He had a predilection for the well-worn and the shabby, for things whose gloss had been rubbed off, revealing the sterling stuff below. Of this he had caught more than a glimpse in Nick; and Nick had fitted in; with Nick in it the house was like itself. But now he felt he might be anywhere. Everything was sharpened and accelerated and accentuated; everything was hard and bright and brittle; the very quality of the light seemed to have changed. It was a question of catching up, of being on time, of looking, laughing, answering, all at the right moment, and Mr. Pennefather was not built for speed.

When they rose to go into the drawing-room for coffee, Colum asked his host if he

might use the breathing space to give him a small present—'not very small in size', he said, approaching the parcel—for he had timed his inquiry to coincide with the exact moment when they would pass through the hall—'but, I'm afraid, of very little intellectual content.' Permission given, he lifted the parcel in his arms, incidentally demonstrating how the unwieldy cube could be carried with perfect grace, and glided behind it into the drawing-room. Here he immediately saw the one place where it would stand and not look awkward; and almost before they had time to wonder what was in it, or lament their cooling coffee, the wrappings fell away, to disclose what they at once saw was a cigar cabinet. But a cigar cabinet with a difference, for instead of the air of opulence, subdued or unabashed, that such objects usually have, this one with its glass knobs, its delicate grey colour, the fine lines ruled across its face, seemed effortlessly to proclaim the superiority of workmanship to wealth. It combined the charm of a model with the magnetism of a toy; and in some mysterious way, as presents so often do, it recalled in miniature its donor. Lost in admiration, they crowded round it, touching it, exclaiming at the polish, the finish, the close fit of the little drawers; and when they looked up, there was Colum beside them, but the litter that bestrewed the floor had vanished.

Next morning it was found in the waste-paper basket, but how it got there was a mystery. No messiness, no fuss: the floor looked as though a carpet-sweeper had been over it. Even the box was nowhere to be seen. Later they wondered why they hadn't seen it, but at the time only the cabinet was visible and real: the conjuror's accessories had all disappeared.

Margaret had told Colum of her father's weakness for cigars, so there was nothing miraculous in the aptness of his gift. No doubt Mr. Pennefather guessed this, and was not too much startled by his prospective son-in-law's acumen. But as he sat inhaling one of the best cigars that the post-war world could offer, in the ceremonious silence demanded by such a treat, he did not feel inclined to look Colum's gift-horse in the mouth. It was much too pleasant on its own, for one thing, and, for another, Mr. Pennefather had, for some time past, been steadily losing his opposition to the match. He accepted it as inevitable, and besides, his nature craved a return to his old relationship with Margaret. Any olive branch that Colum offered he would have met half-way. Here was the olive-branch, a veritable pipe of peace. His mind grew too drowsy to choose its metaphors. Life is not a matter of smoking cigars, but while one is in the act of smoking them it seems so, and there were hours and hours of pleasure stored up in the cabinet. Even the most suspicious father-in-law cannot feel the same after a present as before it; if Colum was not the man he would have chosen for his daughter's husband, he was a lively, likable, handsome fellow. And it was a pleasure to see, through the fragrant smoke, how admiringly she looked at him, and he at her. The glances she exchanged with Nick had been less lover-like.

Later in the evening, when he had gone to bed, Margaret and Colum sat talking—both rather drowsily, she trying to memorise the nice things he was saying about her father, to tell him the next day. 'I didn't expect to find him quite such an old darling,' Colum said. 'He seemed to swallow me, hook, line and sinker. He even told me it would do you good to marry a Catholic. He said you hadn't had enough religion in your life, and it was his fault.'

'Did he really?' said Margaret, pleased. Imagine her father saying that.

'Colum,' she said.

'Darling, you say my name so nicely.' It seemed cruelly inhospitable to take him at a disadvantage, almost as defenceless to her stroke as Sisera to Jael; but it would be best to get it over, and Margaret felt that what she had to say was too important to await a favourable moment; it was tact-free, and dictated its own context.

'Should you mind very much if I don't become a Catholic?'

'Become what, darling?' he asked sleepily.

'A Catholic—I mean, not just at once.'

'Of course not, darling. Why should I mind?'

Had she heard him right? she wondered.

'Well, you asked me to, you know.'

'Did I darling? If I did, it was the most awful cheek.'

Colum left early on Monday morning. Impossible as it seemed for such a powerful vehicle, the car crawled to the garden gate and Margaret walked beside it, holding Colum's hand through the window. He kissed it before he let it go, and she only waved half-heartedly, for fear the wind might blow the kiss away.

Later in the day the Victorian pincushion—an octagonal affair of variously-coloured velvet, made in segments like an orange—which had always stood on her dressing-table, was discovered to be missing. It had been her mother's and she cherished it. A thorough search was made, but the pincushion did not turn up. The only explanation seemed to be that a poltergeist had taken it. But the mind accepts the miraculous more easily than it is sometimes thought to, and Margaret had quite ceased to wonder about its disappearance, when two or three days later she came across it, looking oddly out of place, in the middle of Colum's writing-table.

'Why, there's my pincushion!' she exclaimed.

'Yes, dear, I wanted something of yours. Did you miss it?' he asked innocently.

'Of course I did! I hunted high and low! I never thought you were a thief!'

'Well, now you know,' he said.

CITADELS

That king spent fifty years or more
holding the devil at bay:
work was another name for war;
at last, growing grey,
he withdrew his men,
thought the devil would scarcely
trouble him again
since they had fought so fiercely.
And in no time the enemy
came swarming fresh from Hades,
quietly took the city
and raped the golden ladies.

But this one at the first surprise
let the invaders in;
allowed them to swank and fraternise
and soak themselves with gin:
and when they stank with pleasure
and seemed at their most ghoulish,
gravely took their measure
and found them rather foolish.
Disarmed them while they snored,
prodded them back to Hades,
and feeling never so bored
returned to his golden ladies.

RICHARD KELL

2

ITALIAN AND OTHER FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON DUTCH ART

NIKA HULTON

How much, it is often asked, did foreign, and especially Italian, art influence Dutch painting, for this painting appears at first sight to be essentially national and 'peculiar'?

Until the end of the Sixteenth Century it is naturally impossible to divide Dutch art from that of Flanders, for it was only after the Reformation that the two countries became separate. Flanders remained Catholic, whilst Holland accepted the Reformed Church. With it she rapidly evolved a new national outlook, and a new national form of art.

At the moment when Holland became independent, and was to have, like Athens, a hundred years of artistic glory, her way of life was still, obviously, similar to that of Flanders. So it is only by studying the masters of the still undivided Low Countries, bearing in mind those who had been subjected to foreign influences, that the evolution of Dutch art can be followed, until it leads to the glories of Vermeer and his group.

It is difficult to give a clear picture of the interplay of influences in the art of the Low Countries, for they were teeming with painters whose lives and ideas jostled each other.

It is not known whether a Flemish School existed before the two Van Eyck brothers, Hubert and Jan, who were born at the beginning of the Fifteenth Century. The mastery of the brothers can partly be explained by the fact that the more gifted of the young Flemish painters studied in France, where the Giotto-Sienese influence was already alive. Yet, how different are the angels of the 'Adoration of the Lamb' (whether it was painted by Hubert or Jan) from the figures of Giotto! They have none of the heaviness, or squareness of those in the Scrovegni Chapel at Padua. They are graceful, without the excessive courtliness of Simone Martini; and they are already imbued with all the realism which will later give the Flemish School a character of its own, until it partly loses it in its persistent desire to emulate Italy.

We know that Rogier Van der Weyden visited Rome, Florence, Ferrara and Milan in 1450. He undertook this journey at the age of about fifty, for he was born in Tournai in 1399; and it can easily be seen how his later pictures bear traces of Italian influence, unfortunately, at the expense of the robust equilibrium and unstudied grace of his early manner. If the small painting at Bruges—the head of a weeping Virgin—is by him, as is now thought, it probably belongs to his pre-Italian period. For, in spite of the very graceful poise of the head and hand, it has none of his later preoccupation with external details. He is obviously solely interested in the sorrow and anguish from within.

With Rogier Van der Weyden's visit to Italy, the first signs of a new style made their appearance, soon to blossom forth. Although realism was not yet sacrificed, elegance, and a certain suavity, alien to the Northern spirit, began to appeal to some painters, and to some of the public. Thus the way for the Romanist conception was opened. However, it was not felt strongly until the advent, at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, of Jan Gossaert (Mabuse) whose profound admiration for the conception of form of Leonardo da Vinci is unmistakable.

In 1508 the powerful Duke Philip of Burgundy became the patron of Mabuse and took him to Italy where he painted for him 'the best monuments of antiquity'. A preoccupation with external details made its appearance in his portraits, and especially in his religious subjects, and,

although his style was realistic, an element of artificiality crept in. What a difference there is between his 'Adam and Eve', in Brussels, and Jan (or Hubert) Van Eyck's conception of our first ancestors! How different are his virgins from those of Hans Memling, who died only in 1494, but who kept aloof from foreign influences and who, perhaps partly through this, evolved an art so completely balanced and perfectly harmonious that it is without equal in Flemish painting of this period. How poorly he compares with his contemporary, Gerard David, who died in 1523. How much less simplicity there is in his figures—how much more ornamentation and preciosity! Yet, in spite of all, he remains a great painter. For he did not entirely disregard the lessons of the past, and his Italianism was merely superimposed on a firm Flemish tradition.

Martin Van Veen (or Martin Heemskerck, as he is called, born in 1498) was a true 'Romanist'. It was mainly he who set the fashion for imitating the Italians which triumphed for so long in the Low Countries. Jean Bellegambe, born in 1470, who probably never even saw Italy, followed the general tendency of imitating her painters. All the same, he is an artist of great merit. Yet, in spite of a certain grandeur and the gift of imagination, he has little spontaneity. The same cannot be said of Van Orley, who in the eyes of Dürer—as in those of modern critics—has such natural gifts that no amount of Romanism could stifle his genius. He taught Michael Coxcie, who was so much under the spell of Italy that he was called 'The Flemish Raphael'.

Meanwhile an original school had grown up in the Low Countries, with Bois-le-Duc as its centre. Jerom Bosch, born between 1450 and 1460, lets loose into the world his diabolical and fantastic figures. Dimunitive devils emerge out of shells; cylinder-shaped faces (only seen again in Salvador Dali) appear in the sky. How far his imitators, who were many, were impervious to foreign ideas, it is difficult to say. What does seem true is that they prepared the way for Peter Brueghel the Elder, who, with his unique treatment of life and landscape, remains one of the greatest and most original painters of the Low Countries. He also travelled in Italy, but, instead of bringing back a conventional architectural style, brought back a new conception of landscape, as in the 'Icarus' at Brussels.

Quentin Matsys, born at Louvain in 1466, seems also untouched by Romanism. His treatment of flesh is unique. Pink without excess—the colour applied with a brush so evenly that it might have been sprayed—it seems to convey, without any apparent lines, the age of the subject. 'The Family of the Virgin' and 'Scenes from the Life of St. Anne', in Brussels, are great masterpieces. Matsys is pre-eminently a Northern painter, with all that this implies in precision, realism and simplicity. Yet the black eyes of the Virgin and of her relatives grouped round her (which, incidentally, do not converge) are slightly reminiscent of the heavy-lidded look in Piero della Francesca—and more so in the Ferrarese, Cosmé Tura.

The second part of the Sixteenth Century in Flanders saw a prolific growth of Italianism. Trade had expanded, and travelling was easier. Northern painters travelled to Florence, to Venice and even more to Rome, which became the principal shrine of art. Michelangelo and his robust forms became the ideal of all painters. Franz Floris (1516–70) indulged in an orgy of nudes in his 'Fall of the Angels' (in the Antwerp Museum) without having entirely abandoned the tradition of Bosch; heads of dogs, birds and cats are strangely mixed with human forms. Martin de Vos (1532–1603), who remained in Italy for ten years, left enormous, and somewhat confused, triptyches. His portraits are of a finer quality.

The two teachers of Rubens, Otto Veenius (1556–1634) and Van Noort (1557–1641), also seem to be under Roman influence, in different degrees. While the graceful and harmonious Otto Veenius is clearly influenced by Correggio in the Brussels 'Mystic Marriage of St. Catharine',[1] Adam Noort, who, with his strong, stark figures, seems to be the exact opposite of Veenius in everything, appears to keep to the Northern tradition almost entirely, although one cannot deny his

[1] See plate opposite page 64

figures a certain resemblance to those of the Italian Renaissance. He seems to have given his great pupil a love of the monumental and the robust.

The situation in Holland was not dissimilar, though modified by the religious difference. For, although Cornelius Cornelisz of Harlem (1562–1638) had never seen Italy, he unceasingly imitated her art. Goltzius (1553–1616), with his foreshortened body of Adonis (in Amsterdam), was only a poor and mechanical imitator of Mantegna's foreshortened Christ of Milan.

While other masters, such as 'Brueghel of the Velvets' (Peter Brueghel's younger son, 1565–1625), indulged in paintings of the courtly and luxurious life, Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Rembrandt van Ryn (1606–1669) made their appearance. The influence of Italy on Rubens is obvious. At the age of nineteen he entered the studio of Veenius, the admirer and follower of Rome. Then in May 1600 he left for Italy. In Venice he took service with Duke Vincente Gonzaga and stayed with him for eight years, never ceasing to study the Italian masters. He followed the same path as the Romanists; but the lessons which caused their downfall gave him a new conception in which his genius could live and expand.

Yet his first painting—a triptych at Grasse, executed in 1602—does not yet reveal the quality of his genius. It is violent, crude and bombastic, and lacks the simplicity and robustness which he learnt from his first master, Van Noort. In 1604 his genius suddenly seems to mature, for, although the 'Transfiguration' at Nancy is an imitation of Raphael, and 'The Baptism of Christ' partly of Raphael and partly of Michelangelo, one can already see in them the fruition of lessons learnt in Italy.

Rubens' life, his travels, his successes, his marriages, are all well known. His patrons were so numerous that a large studio was kept constantly working for them. His sketches are usually preferred to a great number of his larger canvases, for it is assumed that they are the work of his own hand. Yet his greater compositions, whether entirely executed by him or not, cannot fail to give an almost overwhelming feeling of awe—an awe of a different nature perhaps, but not less intense than that which one feels in San Rocco in Venice, or in the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

Apart from being his own individual gigantic self, Rubens is partly Flemish and partly Italian in feeling. He has retained from Flanders his solidity, his truthfulness, his joy in life, and a certain grossness, precision and care for detail, which is especially evident in his portraits, and which, with a few exceptions, is the weaker side of his art. He has also acquired from his Flemish origin the lush and voluptuous treatment of the flesh, which is not equalled either by Titian or Veronese. From Italy he has acquired the magnitude of the conception, the boldness of the composition which, though chaotic at first sight, is as meticulously worked out as that of Andrea del Sarto.

Rubens has often been called the Flemish Tintoretto. Yet, though he renders movement as well as this Italian master, his treatment of it is quite different. While Tintoretto partly uses light and shade to produce this effect, Rubens's shapes seem to disintegrate into their environment and melt into the air. To what extent was Rubens influenced by Tintoretto? We know that he lived in Venice and had certainly studied his works. This study must have affected him; for in his 'Raising of the Cross' at Antwerp (which is often called his chief masterpiece) the man who lifts the cross, seen from the back, with his muscles straining under the weight, is very like the figure which in Tintoretto's 'Crucifixion' in the School of San Rocco at Venice pulls at the ropes which lift the cross on which Jesus is already nailed. One often sees in Rubens's compositions gigantic figures which, like those in Tintoretto's works, seem to push away from the spectator towards the depths of the picture. It should be added that Rubens also had a profound admiration for Titian.

What would his paintings have become had he not travelled in Italy? It is difficult to say—and unnecessary to surmise. It remains that Rubens was deeply affected by the Italian Renaissance, and emerged

from this influence possibly greater than he would have been without it.

Although born only thirty years later than Rubens, Rembrandt van Ryn (1606–1669) belongs, both historically and artistically, to a different period: historically, because Holland had already adopted Calvinism, and had separated herself from Flanders and the oecumenical Spanish world; artistically, because the end of the Sixteenth and the beginning of the Seventeenth Centuries saw the shifting of the artistic centre from Italy to France. This was not because France had yet evolved a school which could vie with the Italian Renaissance, but because with the status which the French were beginning to accord to the arts, she was becoming their foremost patron. Nevertheless, patronage should not be mistaken for artistic merit, and it was to Italy that Claude (incidentally a Lorrainer, 1600–1682) and Poussin (1594–1665) went to find inspiration for their beautiful landscapes. Poussin, it is true, introduced into his pictures a truly French balance which he superimposed upon Italian classicism.

Italy was meanwhile becoming 'mannerist' and decadent. Naturally this decadence did not take place between the birth of Rubens and that of Rembrandt, but it reached its nadir at the time when the young Rembrandt was apprenticed to Swanenburg, a local painter who had worked in Italy.

We know much about Rembrandt's life which, in spite of his enormous output (he is said to have painted between six hundred and a thousand pictures), had more setbacks than triumphs. We know about his money difficulties and his weakness for drink; and we also know about his old age which, without the companionship of Hendrickje, would have ended in complete loneliness and dejection. Fortunately we can also follow the work of time upon his face in his numerous self-portraits, in which we see him changing from a full-lipped, small-eyed elegant man to a slovenly sexagenarian with, in his last self-portrait, a towel round his head instead of the famous skull cap.

His pictures fill not only the Rijksmuseum and the Six House at Amsterdam, —the town in which he lived from the age of thirty-one; they are also dispersed among the principal galleries of Europe. When we look at them, we are confronted with a new, gloomy, romantic, monochrome vision of the world. The preoccupation is no longer with movement, or richness of colour, but with the seemingly capricious interplay of light and shade. Powerful faces emerge from the darkness; and although there is in them no conscious desire for romanticism, they seem already to suggest Delacroix—and possibly Gericault.

'The Lesson in Anatomy', painted at the age of twenty-six, made Rembrandt famous. But it was only ten years later, with the 'Night Watch', that he reached the fullness of his talent. As a picture it is perhaps not appreciated as much as it should be. The proportions are said by some to be faulty, for the lieutenant seems too short, compared with the captain and the soldiers. The light falls unnaturally on the hand of the captain, and on the figure of the lieutenant, leaving too much of the picture in the shadow. In spite, however, of all criticism, whether founded or unfounded, seen as it is in the Rijksmuseum, the picture cannot fail to impress as one of the superb masterpieces of the world.

Rembrandt's portraits represent perhaps three quarters of his paintings. It is impossible not to admire their perfect execution, due to the immense trouble he invariably took to study the human face—whether his own or that of his patrons. Among the most interesting are 'The Gentleman with a Glove', 'The Lady with a Fan', and the portrait of the Burgmeester, Jan Six, his faithful protector until his death.

In his Biblical pictures Rembrandt uses his light and shade technique to the full. His figures—hesitant, humble, imbued with a religious feeling of a kind he alone experiences—emerge from the dark like ghosts, to be suddenly hit by rays of unnatural light. It is interesting to compare his 'Holy Family' at the Louvre with Rubens's 'Holy Family' at Antwerp in order to appreciate the gulf set between the two masters. While Rubens is colourful and fastidious, Rembrandt renounces

all pomp and rhetoric. His figures are of a dreamlike texture, and seem to be made alive by an inner force. Rubens is an extravert. Rembrandt reaches perhaps the limits of introversion.

In 1661 Rembrandt painted the 'Syndics of the Cloth Hall' (Amsterdam)—a remarkable collection of portraits which, with 'The Jewish Bride' (Amsterdam), 'Homer' (The Hague), 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' (Hermitage), 'St. Matthew' (Louvre), and a few others, were his last works. He died in 1669, after having, in spite of his comparative lack of contemporary success, given birth to a new school, which only failed because of the mediocrity of his successors. This, excepting Carel Fabritius of Delft, whose few pictures are real gems of taste and perfection. These include the 'Goldfinch' at The Hague, and his 'Portrait of a Man', in Brussels. Although a pupil of Rembrandt, his style is very far removed from that of his master, and he is often included in Vermeer's group by modern critics. The only reason why he is mentioned here is that he was taught by Rembrandt.

To what extent was Rembrandt influenced by Italy? We know that he never went there: whether because the influence of Italy was waning, or because, with the Reformation and independence, Holland became more isolated, is not known. All the same, we know that Rembrandt collected Italian masters. His studio was full of Italian paintings, which he sold in times of financial trouble. We know that he admired Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci. We know also that the taste for Guido Reni and Caravaggio had percolated to the north. Chiaroscuro was then the fashion. Interest in colour, in the sense in which Titian, Giorgione and Veronese had mastered it, had declined.

The fact that colour was not Rembrandt's main preoccupation is borne out by his interest in etching; and his etchings should be studied carefully if one wants to comprehend his art. His palette is certainly different from that of Rubens and his Italian masters. While Rubens uses 'mother colours', Rembrandt is fond of much more complex hues, which give his paintings the dark-brown, drab appearance which some find so displeasing. Whether he was, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by Caravaggio, and whether for this reason he was so harshly criticised at the time when everything pertaining to that great master and the chiaroscuro school was right out of fashion, is not certain. Clive Bell opined: 'Except for a few of his later works, Rembrandt's sense of form and design is utterly lost in a mess of rhetoric, romance and chiaroscuro' (1914). Nevertheless, whether influenced by Italy or not, Rembrandt remains a solitary, but gigantic figure—one of the greatest and most profound interpreters of the soul.

Whilst Italian influence can be easily traced in Rubens, and perhaps in Rembrandt, Franz Hals (1584–1666) seems very little affected by foreign schools, and can, perhaps, be called an ancestor of Impressionism. His chief paintings and portraits have remained collected in the same house at Harlem. His 'Women Guardians of the Old Men's Almshouse' can well be compared with pictures of similar subjects by his contemporaries, hung in the same room—or with 'The Shoes' by Van Gogh, in his Dark Period. While his contemporaries were faithful to the minutest details, which were so dear to the Dutch that their work was more in demand than his during his lifetime, Hals already used a freer brush. His method may appear slapdash, and his colours too thickly laid. One must already stand at a certain distance from his canvases, not on account of the overpowering effect of the figures, as with Rubens, but because of his treatment, which demands a novel visual adaptability. Although four centuries removed, Van Gogh seems more akin to Hals than do any of his contemporaries.

Who can say whether Van Gogh was influenced by Hals, and, if so, to what extent? But his Dark Period, when he used so much black and smoky grey (very different from the dark colours of Rembrandt) was very similar to the colours found in the 'Banquet of the Officers of St. Jorisdoelen' in the Franz Hals House at Harlem.

Landscape—and seascape—were always important in Dutch art. Apart from Jacob

Ruysdael (1629–1682) and Meindert Hobbema (1638–1709), who are both famous throughout the world, and represented in the great European museums, and who so far transcended the Italian influence that it is difficult to trace it, there are numerous Romantic and Picturesque painters who, unlike these two, are direct heirs, not only of the Mannerists, but also of the great masters of the Renaissance. Good examples of such painters are Paul and Matthew Brill (1554–1626 and 1550–1580), who spent most of their lives in Italy; Van Poelenburgh (1586–1667), whose 'Diana and Callisto', in the Wallace Collection, is typical of the Italian influence; and Nicolas Berchem (1620–1683), whose 'Italian Landscape'—in the Rijksmuseum—with the tower of a ruined castle in the distance—shows the influence of Giorgione's 'Tempest'.

Italian feeling is not so easily traced in the seascape, for the Dutch introduced into it a realism hitherto unknown. Whether stormy, as in some of Ruysdael's canvases, or infinitely vast and calm, as in Jan van Goyen (1596–1656), or Jan van de Capelle (1624–1679), who was, perhaps, the first before Whistler to imprison the whole horizon in his pictures, the sea had never before been painted with such power and perfection. On the other hand, the Dutch seascape painters may have drawn some of their inspiration from the rare Italian pictures of ports of the end of the Fifteenth Century, such as 'The Debarkation of St. Ursula', by Carpaccio, in Venice.

'Genre' pictures play a great rôle in Holland, not because of their quality, for it is often mediocre, nor because of their great number, for by the end of the Seventeenth Century they had become as plentiful as souvenirs at a seaside resort, and were treated almost as such, but because 'genre' marked the advent of a new trend in Dutch painting. This was a desire to escape from Italian artistic supremacy — indeed from all foreign influences.

The 'Seven Provinces' had renounced the Catholic Church and its pageantry, and the Spanish world and its pomps. They turned to the humbler classes—their everyday life, their pastimes, their feasts—and their vices! Thus, Jan Steen (1626–1679) in 'After the Carouse', in the Rijksmuseum, depicts a peasant woman lying on a bench drunk. Adriaen van Ostade (1610–1685) in 'Peasants Eating' represents two old men and a woman gathered round a dish—and displaying an extreme gluttony. Ostade's 'Cobbler', where the cobbler sits in the dog-kennel, and the dog sleeps on the roof, seems particularly suggestive, and typifies this special type of 'genre'. Though realistic and, in the case of Brouwer (1606–38), Molenaer (1600–1668) and Jan Steen (1626–1679), of great quality, it strikes one as unnecessarily gloomy and exaggerated. This style became prevalent because the Dutch wanted, subconsciously, to expose their wounds to the world—and because they wanted to get right away from Italian influence. There were painters of stiffly respectable middle-class life—as opposed to painters of loose slum life, like Dirck Hals ('The Prodigal Son' in the National Gallery) and H. G. Pot ('The Merry Company'). 'The Merry Company' is normally in the Mauritshuis at The Hague, but, owing to war damage, it is temporarily in the fine modern gallery in the Stathoudersland which constitutes the City Museum. But even with the painters of middle-class life, the only conscious affiliation with the Italians is the interest shown in clothes and stuffs, with certain postures suggestive of Longhi. The picture is centred round an object of everyday life, often a dinner table—an essentially Northern institution. The romanticism and extravaganza so alien to Protestant life are eschewed.

The reaction has set in, and will give birth to an art of supreme purity and simplicity in the paintings of Vermeer and his group.

Although most Dutch painters of this period, Vermeer included—like the rest of the world—had followed the lessons of the Italian schools, especially in their religious pictures, if one must place De Hooch (1629–1678), Vermeer (1632–1675) and Samuel Van Hoogstraeten (1627–1678) in time, it is surely into the future, rather than into the past, that we must look for comparisons.

Their composition is mainly concerned with space, and the figures seem to have been put in only to preserve the spatial harmony and balance. Emotion, romanticism,

Otto Veenius, Brussels *The Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine (1589)*

Correggio *Mystical Marriage of Saint Catherine*

light and shade effect, are absent. The approach is made through the eye to the intellect. It is in the assumption that the art of Vermeer and his group is concerned with problems of space, and that its appeal is intellectual, that one can compare it to modern art, through Cézanne (especially in his architectural picture of Mont St. Victoire, where the houses, and indeed all forms, seem to have a measured relation to the sky) and finally reaching Henry Moore—and especially Giacometti, where movement and its relation to space seems to be the greatest preoccupation. This, admittedly, is comparing the work of *painters* with that of the Moderns, who are first and foremost *sculptors*.

However, whereas Giacometti is concerned with the moving shape, Vermeer and his group live in a 'still' world. 'The Lady at the Virginals' has in her demeanour the immobility and quiet of Piero della Francesca's figures. It seems inconceivable that she should ever leave her position and sit down at her instrument. The mother and the child in De Hooch's 'Mother' (in Berlin) seem fixed in their attitudes for eternity.

Samuel Van Hoogstraeten's 'Peepshow Cabinet' in the National Gallery is a very good example of a spatial picture. Through an open door in the right-hand corner of the canvas another open door is visible. Then, beyond the incidental figure of a woman sewing, four panes of a window are seen. The left side of the picture consists of a glass partition through which one sees the continuation of the tiled floor. Although this is, perhaps, the prototype of a true space—picture, Vermeer seems to possess an inborn sense of proportion (found later in Cézanne) and has no need of such subtleties.

From the middle of the Seventeenth Century onwards the Dutch had a unique and peculiar trade relationship with the Far East. They learned the art of painting porcelain, being no doubt influenced in this by China and Japan. How far can the china blues, yellows and greys of Vermeer be attributed to this? As for Italy, the one conscious affiliation seems to be the picture of the Romanist, Paul Moreelse, which forms part of the background of one of Vermeer's most perfect compositions, no doubt in order to obey his laws of proportion. It is an odd reminder of the tenacious hold of Italy upon all art.

THE WAY BACK

A path curls down to the crimson river,
to waters pricked by thin gold bars.
Here, I have always tried to discover,
behind its appearance, the love of my lover
who waits on the distant side of the river.

Helpless and held by a voice over water,
loud as the lull in a long night fever,
I think of the time when the heart shall recover
footsteps of faith on the face of the water;
and think of the time when faith shall disclose

the patient pity of the thorn,
the fragile secret of the rose.

EDMUND COOPER

Experiments in the use of the third dimension in the film have been increasing in certain countries, including Britain. In this article Roger Manvell discusses this new stage in the technical expansion of motion pictures, and some of the artistic principles involved

FILMS IN SPACE

ROGER MANVELL

BERNARD SHAW in *Back to Methuselah* represented artistic creation as a kind of game. His point of view was not entirely frivolous. A great deal of painting, poetry, sculpture and music, to take some of the most formal of the arts, delight us because of what Wordsworth referred to as 'the sense of difficulty overcome'. In other words, in their technical aspect, works of art are the result of a kind of struggle between the expressive genius of the artist and the formal nature of the medium he has chosen.

Old traditions set a pattern which the new artist expands or overthrows in the process of evolving a new tradition. And so the arts grow in the hands of their masters, the challenge of formal expression widening and deepening, but never in fact allowing the same degree of freedom which living forms possess. It is against the interests of art to let the artist cease to be a craftsman with a difficult trade to learn in handling words, musical instruments, paints, or the tools of carving. With the coming of photography, the main movements in painting became more formal than ever before, while music and poetry have set themselves ever harder tasks of craftsmanship since the lax and easy era of the mid-nineteenth century. The sculptor delights now in the rigours of his stone. The pride of the artist remains not only in the quality of his experience but at least equally in the quality of his craftsmanship in fulfilling the technical challenge offered him by his medium.

* * *

The sound film is a highly technical art. To people who know little about it, it appears to be merely a mechanical medium, reproducing with varying degrees of accuracy the face of actuality, or what sometimes passes for actuality in the form of film stars and their habits. It is an easy mistake to make, though it takes no account of the astonishing work of the various masters of film art from D. W. Griffith's time to the present day. For the film has been its own worst enemy. Only in the work of comparatively few film-makers is the discipline of a mature art medium fully accepted, and as a result the complex nature of the film's artistic qualities revealed.

All photography begins with a form of representationalism—that is, it reproduces in two dimensions what is set before the camera. The subject photographed, however, whether it is as 'real' as an actual street scene or as 'unreal' as Paul Sheriff's designs for the French court in the film of *Henry V*, undergoes a change in the direction of the artificial when it is reduced to an image in two dimensions which is seen as a pictorial composition within the boundaries of a rectangular frame. A scene in a film may be deliberately distorted to achieve atmosphere or dramatic effect, like the distortion of perspective which John Bryan introduced into many of the sets for David Lean's production of *Oliver Twist*. A film pictorially considered is a flow and flux of highly varied images, almost all in motion, which produce on the audience a rhythmic and aesthetic effect which is highly controlled and very far removed from the normal experience of direct observation in life.

Technically, however, the broad development of the film has always been in the direction of a higher degree of representation. The flat, grey pictures of early days have become the beautifully-lit, sharply-defined images of today, which glow with glossy good health and well-being. The voiceless profiles of the past have become the talking faces of today. Silent films nowadays seem far removed from real life when compared with sound

films. Sound-on-film has become clearer and clearer, with an increasing emphasis on the quality of the reproduction. But imagination has seldom kept pace with these technical developments, and films which have every care lavished on them from the point of view of the mere representation of physical appearance and the quality of their sound may be quite pedestrian in their treatment of subject. The moment that a film nowadays shows signs of imagination, it is at once regarded as exceptional, as indeed it is, and praise is lavished on it. For productions like *Intolerance*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Kameradschaft*, *Brief Encounter*, *The Third Man*, *Le Jour se Lève* and *Bicycle Thieves* are all signs that the film is an art, and that mere representation for its own sake is not the sole preoccupation of the film-maker.

The arrival of sound, which at first lowered the artistic level which the best silent films had established, added an extra sense experience, and freed the artist from the constrictions of working entirely in mimed acting supplemented by written titles which were always breaking into the flow of the story and making the audience read instead of watch. Film-makers like Alfred Hitchcock, René Clair, Lewis Milestone, Anthony Asquith and G. W. Pabst realised that the controlled interplay between sound and picture could make the film a greatly enriched art-form, requiring a high level of imagination and discipline.

* * *

Another technical innovation, the introduction of the third dimension in both sound and picture, is gradually being developed beyond the experimental stage. Pictures 'in space' and sound 'in space' may seem at first to be yet another attempt to flout the principle of accepting properly-defined aesthetic limitations in the practice of film-making. They may seem to draw the medium still more closely towards the reproduction of the living world as it is rather than as the artist chooses to see it. Although this can certainly be the kind of use to which it is put, in fact representationalism need not necessarily become the single objective of the third dimension in film.

The film—and for that matter television—of the future may well use the third dimension as its regular pictorial form. The pictures we see may well possess the illusion of advancing part of the way towards us from the plane of the screen, and receding back to the infinity of the horizon; or the film producers of the future may prefer to use both forms, three dimensional and two dimensional, according to the subject, just as the future of broadcasting will probably find a place for both television and sound radio.

The illusion of the third dimension in still or motion pictures (sometimes called stereoscopy) is not, of course, new, but as far as films are concerned, previous demonstrations have only been very occasional and mainly produced for the sake of offering an amusing sensation to the public. But in Moscow there has been a cinema devoted solely to showing three-dimensional story and documentary films since 1947, while in Britain the first cinema ever to give extensive regular programmes of stereoscopic films (accompanied by stereophonic sound, or sound in space) has been opened under the control of the British Film Institute in the South Bank Exhibition in London.

The third dimension on the screen is, of course, no more than an optical illusion, and its artistic salvation really lies in this fact. Two separate images are projected simultaneously on to the screen, one the repetition of the other from a slightly different viewpoint, just as our eyes record two images of the scene in front of us from two slightly different positions. By the device of polarisation, the two pictures are separately filtered before reaching the screen, and the audience is given polarised spectacles which are filtered correspondingly. Using these spectacles, the eyes blend this pair of two-dimensional images into a single image which creates the illusion of the third dimension. There is little eyestrain except when the spectator is forced to create the illusion of an image approaching very close to him, say three quarters of the distance from the screen or nearer. The illusion that the pictures are receding from the plane of the screen back towards infinity is, however, much easier for the eyes to assimilate.

The films at present included in the

programme at the South Bank Telecinema are mostly in colour, and are both actuality films and animated abstract cartoons drawn by hand. The latter are designed by Norman McLaren, the Scottish film-maker who works in Canada for the National Film Board. One of McLaren's films is intended to train the eyes of the audience in the perception of stereoscopic effects, and it is called *Now is the Time*. The mobile patterns seen approaching nearer and nearer to the viewer were actually drawn directly on the celluloid and superimposed on to a photographed static background. A series of little white clouds stands out like lines of soldiers, each line appearing in succession nearer and nearer. Then a universe of yellow suns with little comic faces is built up in a pattern which reaches out into the auditorium until the suns in the foreground seem to be only about two or three yards away from your eyes. A jumping matchstick figure, changing its shape from animal to man, dances about, now forwards, now backwards. The sounds used for this film could not be made by a musical instrument; they originate on the drawing-board as visual patterns, and have, when heard, a curious staccato plucking and plopping effect.

In McLaren's second and main film, *Around is Around*, a network of dots receding into blue space appears, and then a Saturn-like ring slowly rotates to the sound of a woman's voice, which seems to be singing from an infinity of distance. Then gently undulatory loop-patterns begin to twist against a background of changing colours. These patterns are flanked by a long perspective of upright pillars which, as the film proceeds, change their shapes from poles to trellis-work and then from trellis-work to columns of a more classical design. These seem to stand out almost parallel to the side walls of the cinema. The theme of the film, in so far as it can be said to have one, seems to begin and end with patterns derived from inter-stellar space, and the music specially created by Louis Applebaum, the Canadian composer from Hollywood, with its occasional choric effects, suggests the vast distances of the universe. I think this film both beautiful and exciting. The full space range, both forward and backwards from the screen, was exploited, the image now receding to the infinity of the horizon, and now reaching forwards into the auditorium to within a few yards of one's eyes.

The chief stereoscopic film photographed from actuality is in striking contrast. It is called *Distant Thames*: the simple views of the lovely stretches of the upper reaches of the river, with its bankside gardens and drooping trees, its scenery of green fields and autumn woods, stressed only the spaces *behind* the screen, which became a window looking into a three-dimensional world. A curious visual effect, which may place a certain limitation on photographing actuality in the third dimension, seems to be that the image appears, as it were, to spill over out of the frame, and yet still to be contained within it. You think the Thames will flood out into the auditorium; indeed it appears to be doing so. And yet, of course, it does not, and this offends gravity and is for a while disconcerting until you come to accept it as a convention belonging to the new medium.

With some of these films stereophonic sound is used. Stereophonic sound, or sound in space, means that the music and voices and natural sounds of a film reach your ears from all directions according to the will of the film-maker. Usually the sound comes only from one place, a loudspeaker fitted directly behind the cinema screen. In the telecinema, by using several different sound-tracks which are each linked to separate loudspeakers placed above, behind and to the sides of the audience, it is possible, for example, to have the music originating from one point in the auditorium and the commentary from another. This may seem to be no more than a rather elaborate technical trick, but it allows for the very subtle balancing of musical effects. Sound is, as it were, liberated, and given the freedom of space it possesses in real life. During an interval, a delightful staccato little tune is played, which chases itself round and round the theatre like a puppy dog snapping at its tail, and in *Around is Around* a wonderful sense of endless distance is achieved by blending far-away voices with a three-dimensional picture on the

screen of a slowly-rotating nebula set in a spaciously deep vista of stars.

* * *

The introduction of the third dimension is, in fact, less of a revolution than the introduction of sound, which added an entirely new sense experience to the medium. Undoubtedly the less imaginative film-makers will, for a time at any rate, feed the audiences of the future with all the sensational effects which the third dimension has to offer. It is easy to forecast the huge revolvers pointing out over the auditorium, the dance numbers with lines of legs which seem to kick the roof, and the distortions of space by means of which dancers may seem to rush forward from a far distance until they loom in close-up in front of our seats. Javelins will be hurled at us, automobiles will run us down, fantastic banquets will be spread almost on our laps, and shapely girls will lean invitingly towards us from the window-frame of the screen.

But these tricks of a highly technical trade will not satisfy film-makers of the type who first let their imagination work on the more difficult task of the proper use of the sound track. They will discover more subtle developments for the third dimension. This, as far as I can see, will involve careful experiment with the degree of depth used in representing the objects in the picture and with the degree of rapidity of movement forwards or backwards which will be effective from a *dramatic* rather than from a merely *representational* point of view. For example, in *Brief Encounter*, when the woman played by Celia Johnson rushes across the station platform towards an express train with the momentary hysterical intention of committing suicide, we see the train oncoming at full speed towards her, followed quickly by a long close-up of her face with the carriage lights beating upon it as the train rushes by. Had the film been made in the third dimension, the impact of the train's passage could have been made stronger by slanting it boldly across the forepart of the auditorium, as if the audience were itself standing on the very verge of the platform, while the close-up of the face could be kept in low relief (as it were) rather than in the full round, with the consequent *dramatic* effect of emphasising the weakness of this human being who fails at the last moment to have the courage to throw herself under the train. By exaggerating the dimension of the train in relation to the dimension of the woman, we shall have experienced this moment of agony from her point of view.

In general terms, the use of the third dimension can be scaled up or down from a merely two-dimensional effect through the effect of relief to the full round of realistic stereoscopy. Over and above this, distortions can be introduced of a kind parallel to the distortions of perspective and distance in two-dimensional photography introduced into such films as *Citizen Kane* and *Oliver Twist*. By their means (and only experiment can at this stage determine what can be done in this new method of screen presentation) not only will the dramatic nature of the action be underlined here and emphasised there, but psychological states will be suggested more sharply and more subtly. An angry person, to use a crude example, might be played in a rounder dimension than the victim he is bullying, when each in turn is seen in close-up. Unusual effects will no doubt be achieved in exploiting the relationship of figures or objects *in front of* the plane of the screen (and so outside its immediate frame) to figures or objects represented *behind* the screen. As the initial pictorial crudities of the third dimension are gradually pared away, the true dramatic form of screen relief will take its place.

We shall probably see the third dimension put to its first practical use in certain specialised kinds of technical and instructional film. Its advantages would be obvious in films explaining mechanical processes or such intricate demonstrations as surgical operations. But in whatever direction its possibilities are first developed on a practical basis, only a strict discipline in the use of the third dimension will enable the film-maker to avoid the dangers which the violent powers of stereoscopy represent. Only through the exact imagination of the artist can we hope to achieve true results when the film takes this third technical step towards the direct reproduction of the natural world.

NEW BOOKS

COLLECTED ESSAYS IN LITERARY CRITICISM By Herbert Read. *Faber.* 18s.
ART AND THE EVOLUTION OF MAN By Herbert Read. *Freedom Press.* 4s.

Reviewed by Henry Treece

The work of Herbert Read, whatever form it takes, is gently luminous in the glow of a constant, though restrained, spiritual fervour. Many years ago now, the late Michael Roberts observed of Read's poetry: 'The voice is never raised, there is no overstatement, no collapse into a false rhetoric, and there is a curious austerity in the imagery, an absence of harsh contours and strong lights . . . ' These words might apply equally well to Read's criticism, for most of his literary life has been spent in *explaining* (ceramics, painting, Wordsworth, Shelley, Surrealism) rather than *doing*. As he tells us in *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, he allowed his early talent as a pictorial artist to atrophy during his service in the First World War; and, to those who consider themselves his friends, Read's versatility as a miscellaneous apologist has, as the years have passed, tended to obscure (one hopes not to smother) his considerable talent as a poet.

Herbert Read's poetic abilities had reached that point of first maturity in *Poems* 1914–1934 (published when he was forty-two), from which after a period of recharging he might have leapt into the very foremost rank of contemporary poets. His verse seemed to fulfil any demands he chose to make on it; his dramatic sense (as evidenced in the *End of a War* and in his novel, *The Green Child*) was subtle and acute; his knowledge of psychology was much more than adequate for the needs of a creative writer. Had he been given time to find himself fully as creator, his name might now be mentioned as poet and dramatist as frequently as is Mr. Eliot's, for example.

But there appears to be an aesthetic Malthusianism whose peculiar province is poetry; there is always a Jeffreys, a tax-collector, a war, or another poet to act as its fatal instrument. In Read's case, it was the whirlwind advent of Auden, and the other exciting poets associated with him, no less than the social dilemma of which they were the prophets and doctors (and in an earlier, *passé* stage of which Read himself had fought as an infantry officer).

Collected Essays is the second edition (with one addition) of a volume which first appeared in 1938, and it is a mark of the author's quality of mind and of style that the pieces in this book have not dated. *Art and the Evolution of Man* is the text of a lecture delivered at Conway Hall on 10 April this year.

Collected Essays seems to me to move as close to majority status as English literary criticism may. Among many other topics, it deals with the nature of poetry (narrative, lyric, metaphysical), its impulses, language and techniques. As one would expect, it is full of Read's known idiosyncrasies; one will not look in vain for a discourse on the Psychology of the Unconscious, the distinction between Character and Personality, or between Organic and Abstract Art.

But these are old and endearing hallmarks; Beethoven without his ear-trumpet, or Grock without his little fiddle, would be unthinkable. What is here important is that everywhere Read's language and its emphasis are that which are most appropriate to the thought expressed: 'Obscurity should be distinguished from *ambiguity*. . . . Ambiguity is essentially *grammatical*; obscurity is *imaginative*. As we shall see, it arises before the logical, and therefore grammatical, stage of expression.'

And whether he is writing of Malory or Patmore, Froissart or Hopkins (or even modestly of his own essays in automatic composition), Herbert Read's exposition is balanced, lucid and natural. He is the least academic of scholars.

In *Art and the Evolution of Man* Read again formulates one of his tried old concepts:

'The alternating phases of the history of art generally known as classicism and romanticism, for example, are to be interpreted as alternating phases of evolutionary stability and revolutionary transformation.' (A concept which had started life years before as, 'The transition from the organic type to the abstract always coincides with the transition from a period of stress and energy to a period of satiety and solidity; and that is the historical distinction between romantic and classical periods.')

This soundly-argued lecture discovers primitive art not as play or ritual, but as a stage in communication and self-orientation, and convincingly classifies it as naturalistic, schematic and symbolic.

Academic vested-interest may smell out, in Read's findings, a heresy as great as that discerned in Robert Graves' *White Goddess;* but it is fairly certain that the average reader of sensibility must rap his forehead in despair when Read's back-probing logic forces him to ask, 'Why are we conscious?' And presents him with the answer, 'To find our place in the world!'

THE RISE OF ENGLISH OPERA

By Eric Walter White, with an Introduction by Benjamin Britten. *John Lehmann.* 21s.

Reviewed by Felix Aprahamian

If there is one branch of musical art which has flourished in England since the war, it is Opera. This renaissance is general and has affected not only composers, but interpreters, audiences and the powers that subsidise this expensive, if not exotic and irrational, entertainment. The period between the two wars, although fertile in other forms of music, was an arid one for our native Opera: few were written and fewer performed. Apart from the valiant, but nomadic, seasons of the Carl Rosa Opera Company and those at Sadler's Wells, there was nothing approaching a permanent operatic establishment—a fact which the glamour and glitter of the annual international seasons at Covent Garden helped to obscure. And there was no direct or indirect subsidy.

Today the position is altered. London now boasts two permanent opera houses, both attracting large audiences, and the

'Rare, and indeed astonishing'

'I find this novel rare and indeed astonishing. Its surface has a glitter, with light and shade playing across it. It contrives, by its brilliant painting of character and its sense of small everyday dramas, to exercise a continuous fascination . . .' — LIONEL HALE, OBSERVER

'Voluptuously readable . . . an impressive piece of work.'—NEW STATESMAN

'He is a young novelist on whose future I would willingly gamble . . . I strongly recommend this book.'—C. P. SNOW, S. TIMES

'The author is a genuine novelist whose future work is of importance to the life of the English novel.' — COMPTON MACKENZIE

'Mr. King has something to say in this novel, and he knows how to say it' —JOHN BETJEMAN, D. TELEGRAPH

FRANCIS KING

The Dividing Stream

Book Society Recommend

384 *pages;* 12s. 6*d. net*

LONGMANS

State, under one guise or another, shoulders financial responsibility as in other civilised countries. There is hardly a contemporary British composer of repute who, hoping for a success similar to that of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, which has toured the world's opera houses since its first performance in 1945, has not written, or is not busily engaged in writing, an opera. The distance we have yet to travel along the practical operatic road may be gauged from the knowledge that not one of the new operas awarded the Arts Council's Festival commissions has been produced in London during the summer Festival of the Arts. Yet, in spite of this, and the laments of patriarchal critics and conductors, the spurt forward in English Opera in the past six years is not to be belittled.

This, then, is the exciting moment at which Eric Walter White's splendid volume appears. It fills in the historic background in the first section and summarises the position today in the second. The book, in his own words, 'is concerned with organisation and management, with composers and librettists rather than singers and conductors, and seeks to illustrate the workings of the operatic principle rather than to summarise librettos or analyse musical scores.' There is no one better equipped to do this than Mr. White, the author of two books on Stravinsky, one on Britten (who returns the compliment by contributing an introduction), and Assistant Secretary to the Arts Council, a post which has brought him into close contact with the administrative problems of opera.

A book which treats of English opera from so many angles, and supplies so many facts, runs the risk of becoming unreadable. Mr. White has avoided this by relegating much material to the valuable appendices which make up the third section. His text is still crammed full of information, but is eminently readable on account of its lucid style and the skilful marshalling of the remaining facts into well-planned chapters. Even as a compilation, *The Rise of English Opera* is a notable achievement, and a book to be recommended to all whose interest in opera goes beyond the libretto and the score.

THE TABLE TALK OF SAMUEL MARCHBANKS

By Robertson Davies. *Chatto & Windus.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by Patrick Heyworth

To those who think that good food and good conversation are mutually exclusive, this book of table-talk will offer a host of surprises. Mr. Davies, a Canadian journalist and playwright, has here arranged his paragraphs—'for a good talker should speak in paragraphs and not in disjointed utterance'—under headings which trace the course of a good dinner. All he asks for is a modest meal including 'a Sweet (and if anyone is thinking of asking me to dinner I may say that I am always well content with a Sherry Triffle) and a Savoury (but no unnatural unions of prunes and bacon, if you please).' In return, he himself mixes wisdom, wit, jest and ridicule in generous measure. His conversation simmers with geniality, bubbles with laughter, and occasionally boils with indignation; never for a moment is it tepid or stale; never does he ladle out warmed-up hashes of other people's humour.

It is foolish to try to describe briefly a talker whose conversation ranges from 'Cruelty to Vegetables' to 'The Greatness of the Human Spirit', but a round of quotations will illustrate his varying moods. It angers him to note that Princess Elizabeth was paid 'the dubious compliment' of being included among the 'Six Most Wholesome Women of the Year' by The Women's Research Guild of New York. He is shocked by narrow-mindedness, believing that 'there is a point beyond which purity should not be allowed to go.' Most things, however, just amuse him, and he treats them deftly, with gay sophistry; thus he can conduct his garden on philosophic principles and refuse to be depressed by the absence of flowers—'I did not blind myself, as many gardeners do, to the fact that flower gardens are cultivated principally for the pleasure of bees.'

Now more than ever life needs epicures like Mr. Davies to concoct something palatable out of its humdrum; it is strange that this is his first book to be published in this country.

THE LAST OF THE RADICALS

By C. V. Wedgwood. *Jonathan Cape.* 16s.

Reviewed by Patrick Home

There is a Zulu proverb which runs 'Those that go forward in the battle may be killed; those that go back will be killed.' This could well apply to 'Jos', for courage was never lacking in the man who called himself 'The Last of the Radicals'. Believing implicity in the justice of his cause, whether it was self-government for India, Zionism or the plight of the refugee, he preferred to be the lone warrior rather than to curry favour with party or friends. Few personalities have been so direct and forthright in their views, but then the Wedgwoods, as a family, have always possessed an individual robustness and a solidity founded upon the twin pillars of Puritanism and charity.

Josiah Clement Wedgwood, later to become Lord Wedgwood, was M.P. for thirty-five years for Newcastle-under-Lyme. He began his political life with the Liberal Party, but as the years progressed he found it more and more difficult to identify himself with their policy. Wedded to the economic principles of Henry George —that the land should be free to all—and possessed of a deep and active sympathy with the working-class and their conditions, it was natural that he should move to the Left. After a distinguished career in the 1914–18 war, when he won a D.S.O. at Gallipoli, he left the Liberals and joined the Independent Labour Party. In 1921 he became Vice-Chairman of the Labour Party and had found perhaps his true niche. But 'Jos' was too much of a fighter to pay lip-service to the fettering rules and regulations of his party. He was a Socialist with a conscience. There was too much quixotry in his make-up, too many lost causes to be championed.

What will future biographers find most interesting about him—his work on the History of Parliament which would 'immortalise the past and encourage the future', or his uncompromising stand on the subject of Zionism? His niece, Miss C. V. Wedgwood, has, for the present, given us an attractive and affectionate picture of a warmhearted man.

THE STRENGTH OF THE SHIRES

VILLAGE LIFE

Norman Wymer

A new work by Norman Wymer which will especially delight all interested in English rural life. The origins, development and present state of village life are fully discussed, together with crafts and their guilds, architecture and masonry. Particular attention is given to such interesting facets as rural superstitions, local festivals, customs, practices, sports and dialects.

Fully illustrated. 15/– net

GEORGE G. HARRAP & Co. Ltd

Henry Cecil's

new novel

THE PAINSWICK LINE

10s. 6d. net

In his volume of stories, *Full Circle*, Mr. Cecil dealt humorously but knowledgeably with some of the intricacies of the law. In this, first full-length novel, he invades the racecourse, a country vicarage and the Old Bailey, and the result is an ingenious, unusual and amusing story.

CHAPMAN & HALL

THE MASTER FORGER

By John Godley. *Home & Van Thal.* 9s. 6d.

Reviewed by Bertram Nicholls

Interesting as it is, Mr. Godley's book would have been even more interesting if it had contained reproductions of Van Meegeren's famous forgeries, which few people in this country have ever seen. In an introductory chapter he describes the making of the forgeries, the astonishing ease with which he disposed of them for enormous sums, and the final comic trial when the defendant passionately wished to be found guilty in order to confound the experts who had blandly accepted the pictures as genuine. This introduction is followed by a biography of the painter from his childhood to his death.

It is not a particularly elevating story. Van Meegeren's way of life was raffish. He could be faithful neither to his wife nor to his ideals as an artist, content neither to live modestly on his earnings as an artist nor more lavishly on his earnings as a potboiler. He became obsessed with a rancorous contempt for all critics, experts and authorities, and he determined to expose their ignorant pretensions by painting a fake Vermeer which they should accept as genuine. That he should succeed in this was wildly improbable, but he was secretly spurred on by learning that his closest friend had painted a spurious Rembrandt which Dr. Bredius had pronounced authentic—the same Dr. Bredius who was later to be the first to set the seal of approval on Van Meegeren's earliest 'Vermeer'. Dr. Bredius, indeed, is not the hero of this story. Van Meegeren was not without qualifications for the job. He had early been taught the unusual doctrine that a painter should understand the nature of his materials. He ground his own colours; he had studied the methods and materials of the Dutch seventeenth-century masters; and—scarcely less important—he was familiar with the technical devices of picture restorers. For his problem was not merely to paint as well as Vermeer in Vermeer's manner; he must accept the handicap of painting with a medium which would stand baking in an oven, for only in that way, he believed, could he give to new paint the hardness and resistance to solvents which old paint acquires. And he had first to find the medium. The medium itself is of interest only to picture-fakers, but he found it after four years of patient experiment, and in a matter of six months he painted his 'Christ at Emmaus'.

Mr. Godley's book reads like a work of fiction, and indeed it owes much to the creative imagination. The whole of Van Meegeren's imposture was carried on in absolute secrecy; it was known to himself alone. Yet we are made familiar with his private thoughts, and told in detail of his actions. The author has set out to give us a picture of the man, basing it chiefly on what he has learned from the children of his first marriage, who, however, scarcely appear on the scene at all during the relevant period. Indeed, Van Meegeren has in deception 'stepped in so far' that an aura of suspicion hangs over all. You can hide a canvas and a few bottles and jars when your wife or a friend comes into the studio, but did nobody remark on the presence of a large electric oven capable of taking a canvas fifty inches long? You can account for the smell of lilac oil by having lilac blossom about, but in most gardens lilac only blooms for some three weeks in the year. Perhaps the oddest thing of all is that Van Meegeren did not imitate a typical Vermeer at all, but based his forgeries on the only known example of a religious picture, life size in scale, a picture which is in Scotland, and which it does not appear that Van Meegeren had ever seen. Surely someone by now must have invented the diverting theory that the 'Christ at Emmaus' is after all an authentic Vermeer, of which the subsequent forgeries are an imitation? Perhaps they have? But among all these doubts and uncertainties one truth emerges clearly: both as a large-scale swindler, and as a craftsman in picture-faking, Van Meegeren was in the top rank.

COMPÈRE, VOUS MENTEZ!

By NOËL DEVAULX

Gallimard 300 Frs.

Extracts from this charming fantasy were printed in *World Review* for June. It is the story of the collaboration of a decrepit but still ingenious architect and a precocious girl and the wonderful building they erect.

THE MAKING OF A NATIONAL THEATRE

By Geoffrey Whitworth. *Faber*. 25s.

Reviewed by Roy Walker

Three years before the Great Exhibition of 1851, a London publisher, Effingham Wilson, inspired by the purchase of Shakespeare's Birthplace, put out a proposal for a National Theatre. Charles Kemble sighed to think that 'so much enthusiasm should be doomed to disappointment.' Dickens wished he could 'cherish a stronger faith than I have in the probability of its establishment on a rational footing within fifty years.'

Now, in the middle of the Festival of Britain 1951, the King lays the foundation stone of the National Theatre, with a million pounds of public funds as endowment, to be built on the South Bank where the Shot Tower has been enjoying a final blaze of glory, beside the Concert Hall whose priority need not be grudged.

As Geoffrey Whitworth observes, the fulfilment of a century's work for a National Theatre is bound up with 'public feeling in regard to the place of the drama in the life of the nation', and there could be no better reassurance that the sound-film has not supplanted the living stage in the hearts of Shakespeare's countrymen.

Mr. Whitworth, founder of the British Drama League and Secretary of the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee for the last twenty years, was the right author for a timely history of the enterprise, but if someone else had written it, his own place would have been more conspicuous. He does well to quote at length, though fifty pages of unmitigated *Hansard* at the end is too much of a good thing.

There is an element of absurdity in this chronicle of the difficulties of giving to airy nothing a local habitation as well as a name. From the horrible plot to dominate Portland Place by a statue-memorial on the lines of the Albert Monument, the scene shifts, as famous characters cross the stage, to Bloomsbury, Cambridge Circus, Cromwell Place and finally—and rightly—back to the South Bank where the now tempest-tossed Old Vic becomes a full partner in the enterprise.

Victoria and Albert Museum

THE 'V & A' IS A MUSEUM OF FINE AND APPLIED ART of all countries, periods and styles, including oriental art. It is under the Ministry of Education. The collections include: Architectural Details, Arms and Armour, the Art of the Book, Bronzes, Carpets, Clocks, Costumes, Cutlery, Drawings, Embroideries, Enamels, Engravings, Fabrics, Furniture, Glass, Gold and Silversmiths' Work, Ironwork, Ivories, Jewellery, Lace, Lithographs, Manuscripts, Metalwork, Miniatures, Musical Instruments, Oil Paintings, Posters, Pottery and Porcelain, Prints, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Tapestries, Theatre Art, Vestments, Watches, Water-Colours, Woodwork.

The European collections are mostly of Post-Classical art, from Early Christian times to the 19th century.

The Museum also includes the National Art Library (books and photographs on Art and allied subjects); the National Collections of Post-Classical Sculpture, of British Miniatures, and of Water-Colours; and the National Lantern Slide Loan Collection.

The Museum Galleries, for the first time in their history, are now being rearranged in two distinct, but equally important, groups. The *Primary Collections* (specially arranged in newly decorated galleries and mostly on the ground floor) will show the visitor a connected series of galleries in which masterpieces of all the arts are brought together by style, period or nationality, i.e., Early Mediaeval; Gothic; Late Gothic and Northern Renaissance; Italian Renaissance; English 1500-1850; Continental, 1570-1825, Islamic; Far East; Indian (in the Indian Section). The *Secondary* or *Study Collections*, are arranged according to the material or class of object.

*

The Museum also administers Ham House and the Bethnal Green Museum.

*

OPEN
Weekdays including Saturdays and Bank Holidays 10 to 6; Sundays 2.30 to 6.

CLOSED
Sunday mornings; also Good Friday and Christmas day (all day).

*

ADMISSION FREE

*

SOUTH KENSINGTON
LONDON, S.W.7

Telephone: KENsington 6371

What one misses, except in the prophetic writing of Irving and Granville Barker—whose 1930 specimen programmes include the Histories cycle now showing at Stratford—is a great debate on the theatrical and artistic side of the enterprise, comparable with the inevitable preoccupation with bricks and mortar.

HERE'S ENGLAND

By Ruth McKenney & Richard Bransten. Illustrated by Osbert Lancaster. *Rupert Hart-Davis.* 21s.

Reviewed by Edmund Penning-Rowsell

Guide-books are seldom read by the inhabitants of the country they describe. The classical Baedeker and Murray were aimed at the Anglo-Saxon tourist armed with letters of credit and phrase-books, travelling rugs against 'foreign' weather and the address of the local Protestant chaplain against 'foreign' religion. The difficulties of language mercifully hid from most of the indigenous population the slightly superior, suspicious tone of Herr Baedeker and Mr. Murray. We in England did not condescend to read the guides to our own land, the historical remains of which we rather ostentatiously took for granted.

But now, in Festival Year, it is our turn to be quizzed, commended and criticised. In *Here's England* we have got off pretty lightly. It takes courage for Americans to write a tourist guide to England when that guide is certain to be read by a considerable number of the natives. When, as Ruth McKenney and Richard Bransten do, the writers penetrate to Lords and attempt to describe cricket largely in terms of baseball, they are surely inviting trouble. And yet they pull it off. Their description of cricket is as accurate as it is amusing; whether the American visitor will really be be much wiser afterwards is another matter.

On the other hand, while contriving to soothe our susceptibilities, they manage to keep faith with their compatriots. It would, for example, be idle to pretend that English cookery is usually a delight to eye and digestion, and right away they say roundly, 'English food, take it all in all, is simply terrible.' They proclaim their aversion to raspberry trifle, toad-in-the-hole, kippers, and treacle pudding. Are we, despite our similar doubts about these items on hotel menus, insulted by such foreign disparagement? We are not, being already disarmed by the opening remarks on 'the most beautiful, wonderful, exciting country in Europe . . . My husband and I are not in the least neutral. We *love* England.' And so it proceeds. Wittily, cheerfully, our architecture is described, our history summarised, our national habits analysed. The light-hearted presentation does not obscure the accuracy of most of the information or the shrewdness of the generalisations. Half the book is devoted to London and environs, the rest to seven journeys covering as much of the country as the American visitor with a return steamer ticket in his American Express wallet can hope to see. Perhaps at times one tires of the 'brightness' of the style, the too frequent use of italics for emphasis, but there is a refreshing contrast to the usual run of travel books. Allegedly written for Americans, the English reader may suspect it to be equally directed at him, even if occasional linguistic liberties may cause him to wince.

AN ASSESSMENT OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE

By J. Isaacs. *Secker & Warburg.* 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by Hugh Gordon Porteus

This book represents the 'plain score' of six lectures delivered nearly a year ago on the Third Programme, presented with a quaint blend of modesty and presumption. They are introduced with a coy apology for 'deliberately bad and rhetorical grammar', necessitated by the spoken style. Disclaiming all pretence to prowess as a mere writer, this master of the uttered word observes in passing that his ideal model is Miss Gertrude Stein, whose 'composition as Explanation' he describes as 'the most perfect broadcast script I know.' It should therefore be added that this is, after all, a perfectly readable book, and a document of some value. Nevertheless, to try to round up half a century of literary effort into the compass of a small volume of rather under 200 pages was ambitious. And to risk a prophetic evaluation of this corpus of creative effort, on

behalf of posterity—that is surely presumptuous. (Who, what, *when*, is Posterity)? Those who have heard Mr. Isaacs will not need reminding that he has a fine critical sense, wide interests, and a genial as well as a lucid style of exposition. The general picture conveyed in his opening lecture is admirably balanced and comprehensive. It is, indeed 'a picture of the age as the age itself saw it.' That is, it is a highbrow view of the highbrow figures—condensed for impatient middlebrows. Posterity is likely, however, to alter many of our marks of emphasis and our notions of what is durable. Mr. Isaacs betrays more interest in the predicaments of current and recent intellectual life than in literature itself; as is natural in our time. The *Zeitgeist* may not always be so full of *Angst*!

POEMS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Spanish text with a translation by Roy Campbell. *The Harvill Press.* 12s. 6d.

'God's silent, searching flight;
When my Lord's head is filled with dew, and all
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night.
His still, soft call;
His knocking time; the soul's dumb watch,
When spirits their fair kindred catch . . .'

Henry Vaughan is the nearest of all our home-grown poets to St. John of the Cross, and Roy Campbell has been right, surely, in giving these translations a Stuart turn of language:

'The living fount which is to me so dear
Within the bread of life I see it clear
Though it be night . . .'

Spanish critics have complained of Campbell's Lorca translations that he expands the epithets to produce surrealism where none was intended. But here he has been sober in the extreme, and is defeated only by the extreme sparseness of the words which his poet uses with such miraculous effect. In the famous *En una noche oscura* he is driven to translate *dichosa* as *of delight*, *happy* and *lucky*, in three successive verses, and who shall blame him? But he has done wonders in suggesting the delicacy of metre and in every version there is some of the reflected glow of those immortal fires.

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

17–18 Dover Street, W.1 Gro. 6186

The Institute of Contemporary Arts was founded to encourage collaboration between the various arts and to promote, by means of exhibitions, performances and discussions, the best modern and experimental work on a non-commercial basis, and to establish a centre where artists of all kinds and members of the public can meet informally.

Past activities have included W. H. Auden reading from his own works. Lectures by Dr. Giedion, J. Isaacs, Arnold Haskell, 'Vercors', L. L. Whyte, and others. Discussions led by Herbert Read, Gerald Barry, Dr. Julian Huxley, The Earl of Harewood, Phillip James, Eric Newton and Poetry Readings by Margaret Rawlings, Bernard Miles, and T. S. Eliot. Contemporary Composers including Alan Bush, Peter Racine Fricker and Denis Ap Ivor have given recitals and there are monthly discussions on current exhibitions of paintings in the London galleries.

Membership is open to all who are interested in the activities of the Institute and wish to support the arts.

The subscription is 2 guineas p.a.

Fill in this form and send it to:

The Director,
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
17–18 Dover Street, W.1

Please send me particulars of membership of the I.C.A.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

NEW NOVELS

THE AGE OF LONGING By Arthur Koestler. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.
THE SIXTH COLUMN By Peter Fleming. *Hart-Davis.* 9s. 6d.
VILLAGE STORY By Celia Buckmaster. *Hogarth Press.* 9s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

Mr. Koestler is a stormy, restless writer, but his thoughts are stimulating even if they are not always profound. He is one of those active gifted ones who write novels and journalism, throw themselves into causes and troubles, and have at least the appearance of being as ready with the gun as the pen; they are also always in a state of fever about history as they see it, its theories and examples. This novel is very entertaining and horrifying, very up-to-date, too, even a little into the future (but, alas! nothing dates more quickly than that). The author's theme is gloomy enough but the real prophets of doom may look askance at him because, although he does seem to be singing their song of the Death of the West, is he in fact doing just that? Is he not enjoying himself too much, being a shade too at home in the world and its pleasures, altogether too lively for a funeral guest? The story is a crafty mixture of the sensual and the political; a little philosophy is forked in 'to point a moral and adorn a tale', and of course history, especially Roman history, with which we know Mr. Koestler to be familiar in part. The scene is Paris; the situation—eve of invasion by the Russians (pithily described as neanderthalers with robot brains). Hydie, a beautiful young American—but, oddly for an American, with fat legs—has come to Paris with her father who is heading some mission. She falls in love with Nikitin, a Soviet young man, also on a mission. Mr. Koestler is very good about Russians. There are masterly descriptions of Soviet life, and especially of Nikitin's childhood, upbringing and 'conditioning', and lively, if familiar, pictures of what happens to people who resist. These passages, and the book is fairly full of them, should make the blood boil in the homely hearts of those persons who, in the firm belief that Russia is perfect and Democracy a villain, form groups to 'stop the drift of war.' Mr. Koestler is amusing about these people; *demi-vièrges* he calls them, but sees they are dangerous. And all the time, in and out of the deliciously horrifying, sad love tale of the infatuated Hydie (longing for her convent days, longing, like everybody else in this book, and possibly the author too, for 'something to believe in'—it was the problem of pain that set *her* off) in and out of those fascinating 'advanced' conversations and the funeral procession of the salon-pet, laps this vigorous tide of Soviet analysis and detail. Unfortunately (unless that was the author's intention) the upshot of it all is that Soviet Russia is invested with the governing garment of ruddy life, while the West appears to loll in a dirty shroud waiting for burial. Is Mr. Koestler the young barbarian, compounding with abuse for his enjoyment of Western solaces and falling himself into the trap of the Hegelian false alternative he warns against? Another point that strikes one in this, as in other books he has written, is his optimism. For surely that preoccupation with human misbehaviour, as if there were something noteworthy about it, is optimistic. The pessimist—or should one say the Old Soul?—must surely be surprised not by human vice but by human virtue. It is that which needs explaining.

The Sixth Column, unlike the Fifth who do it on principle, are those in our midst who adhere to the King's enemies not because they have anything against the King or in favour of his enemies, but because it gives them a sense of power; all of which Mr. Fleming sets forth very amusingly; his humour grows out of a deep, affectionate familiarity with English customs, and the snobismus which is a part of it is also very funny, perhaps not always intentionally. Plan D, about which the tale revolves, is an enemy document of

great importance and ingenuity which has come into the hands of Major Foxley-Webb, head of Section D.2(d)—'Dust to Dust'—a simple, upright creature who likes to daydream about hawk-eyed lone exploits in the service of his country on tired camels. It receives at once the attention it deserves. The purpose of the Plan is to undermine the character of the British people by increasing their natural tendency to *laissez-faire* and State-dependence (here Mr. Fleming's dislike of Labour policy takes hold) and in this way to remove what little remains of the pluck, dash and ability to improvise which, in our Island Story . . . (etc.). Just drive home that the enemy (in this case the Russians) are what the British would like to believe—good fathers and husbands, fond of animals, the British, and half a pint in the evening pub, and bang go the Service Estimate and all that is going to enable this country to take a stand. The English operator of the Plan is a national favourite, a radio and columnist personality called Paul Osney, to whose character Mr. Fleming devotes the most loving ferocious care. His downfall is brought about by a combination of happy chances (the skidding of Blue Nile, the national favourite's Persian cat off the window-ledge is one of them) and by the intelligent co-operation of Service personnel and gifted amateurs with the right feelings about country sports and London clubs. In spite of its lightness, this book is a far stronger political weapon than Mr. Koestler's.

Miss Celia Buckmaster is a very witty good new writer. She has her own way of looking at things and writing about them. Her story is perhaps more a picture than a story, a picture of a leisurely country scene with figures stretching themselves out in a variety of postures and moods. The new squire Mr. Noyce is not so sure of himself as the old one was, nor is he so looked up to and revered by the villagers; but then they do not look up to people any longer, only they have a sense of different incomes. Mr. Noyce writes children's stories and his wife is an artist, but she is discontented; she can neither like her husband nor leave him and she does not want to look after the house—old Nanny

ART NEWS & REVIEW

Fortnightly
Sixpence
From your newsagent

Lawrence Alloway
Michael Ayrton
Cecil Beaton
Maurice Collis
Bernard Denvir
J. Isaacs
James Laver
Robert Melville
Eric Newton
John Rothenstein
Denys Sutton
A.D.B. Sylvester
Basil Taylor
&c

including

ART NEWS & REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

comprehensive guide to Art Galleries Theatres & Lectures & Music day by day

Subscription rates
15s per annum including postage
59 King's Road · London SW3

World Review

Make sure of your copy of WORLD REVIEW each month by placing an order *with your newsagent.*

CUT OUT THIS ADVERTISEMENT AND HAND TO YOUR NEWSAGENT OR POST DIRECT TO

World Review

PLEASE supply me each month with WORLD REVIEW

Name .....

Address .....
(*Block letters please*)

.....

Note to Newsagent: Stamp this with your name and address and mail to WORLD REVIEW, 43/44 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.4.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: 12 MONTHS POST FREE

£1 · 0s. · 0d.

can do that. She is not quite an artist, but she has an artist's pains. Over in the farm lives the gentleman farmer, Mr. Ethelburger, and his beautiful lazy wife and their careless lovely children, and old Mother who rather does what Nanny does at the Big House. There is also a self-made solicitor and his old mother. The author takes sides, dashing into the narrative in a perilous way, but it is all right. 'But,' she says, 'it is Mrs. Ethelburger and her husband who are interesting, not Mr. and Mrs. Noyce.' But as a matter of fact everybody is interesting, the old Rector and his wife, better socially, who becomes Communistic to irritate everybody; the old servant's young daughter—the flighty proud darling who takes her thoughts from the films. The situation, too, is interesting, the passing of the easy-running feudal time, the arrival of mixed feelings and mixed societies. All is mixed, and all is also funny—very funny.

A DARK STRANGER

By Julien Gracq. *Peter Owen.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by P. M. Fitzgerald

In *La Littérature à l'Estomac* Julien Gracq wrote a brilliant piece of criticism and the most necessary snub addressed to French letters since the silent reproof of Valéry to Anatole France. But in his play, *Le Roi Pêcheur,* and his novels, he seems to be astray in the darkly romantic catharist world of love and death which was the subject of *Passion and Society.* The blood from the King's poisoned wound dripped so extensively in *Le Roi Pêcheur* that the problem of cleaning up began to supersede every other, and in *Un Beau Ténébreux* the introspection, the death wish and the agonising midnight explanations capsize us almost from the first page.

It is difficult to find modern symbols for the Tristan theme. Here we are at a fashionable hotel at a small seaside resort in Brittany with a group of young men and women on holiday (M. Gracq calls them a 'straight gang' and I wish he would lay off English phrases altogether for a time); the stranger who arrives is the dominating and compelling Allan Murchison, ruthless, sinister, smartly-dressed, calmly smiling by day and full of tormented revelations by night; no surprise when he appears at a fancy-dress dance in a costume of the 1830's with a large bloodstain over the heart; none either when it turns out that he has come to the hotel expressly to commit suicide. This novel is, in fact, more than a little ridiculous, but ridiculous in the right way, that is, through its extravagance. It is full of beautiful writing pitched to a high key, and is sensitive to the least scratch and sound. Here is a description of the hotel on the evening of the dance:

'At 8 p.m. after a quick dinner—with all the doors closed upon rooms filled with febrile steps, click of jewellery and pins handled as by sorcerers, with the quickened, hushed activity of ambushes and hide-outs where powerful magnetism, the light, dry, clicking delirium, the rather fatal, grave solemnity of gala evenings, all accumulate—those doors surprised behind which all the women, when you catch them alone, look for a moment like maniacs rehearsing a murder-scene before their mirrors, the hotel seemed momentarily to slumber, blind and silent, in front of a shore emptied by the twilight, abandoned under the slanting light of the sea to the last spirals, the lazy cries of the sea birds.'

GIOTTO AND PICASSO

World's Masters New Series. Editor: Anthony Bertram. *The Studio Publications.* 3s.

It is impossible to avoid the word 'handy' in discussing these books and they are in fact charming, handy, workmanlike little selections in their neat wallpaper covers, though years of looking at reproductions (Malraux's *musée imaginaire*) at last suggests that *scaling down a picture alters it almost as much as would altering the tones or the colours.* Notice, by the way, that the first titles published in this series are Blake, Botticelli, Vermeer, Holbein, Hogarth, Ingres, Piero della Francesca, El Greco, Michelangelo, Brueghel, Delacroix, Bosch, the Van Eycks, Grunewald, Giotto, Picasso (a few years ago Samuel Palmer and Sassetta would have been included)—a revealing index of the wistful taste of readers hoping to become cultured.

Printed in Gt. Britain at The Curwen Press Ltd., Plaistow, London, for the Publisher and Proprietor, Edward Hulton, and distributed for him by Hulton Press Ltd., 43–44 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch (Australasia) Ltd.; for South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. Registered for Canadian Magazine Post